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# When the Sphinx Awoke: An Eye Witness Account of Egypt's Revolution

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## About the Author

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# When the Sphinx Awoke: An Eye Witness Account of Egypt's Revolution

Nadia E. El-Shazly

## Introduction

The one duty we owe history, said Oscar Wilde, is to rewrite it. Egyptians have done so twice in as many years – in 2011 and again in 2013. Here is my account of what happened.

Now that our youth have freed my country, memories, emotions, incidents keep returning. For the sake of my grandchildren and their generation, I will try to recollect my impressions about those wondrous events, how they developed, their highlights, their low points, and their climax. My other objective is to explain to a wider audience what really happened.

It is 2011 and Tunisia has already shed its dictator. The date of 25<sup>th</sup> January had been set for our uprising, well in advance, to coincide with the National Police Day. The protesters' "Day of Rage" centred on the reign of the police state and its role in helping the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) monopolise political life. Police intervention included the rigging of election results, the systemic rampant arrests without warrants of political activists, torture in police stations and prisons, and the manhandling of protesters, especially their sexual assaults on female demonstrators. The protesters had three main demands: the resignation of the Interior Minister, Habib El-Adly, a term limit of two on the presidency, and an end to the 30-year state of emergency.

At the height of the demonstrations, on 2 February 2011, Professor Marjorie Cohn, an authority on torture, published a study, citing the 2002 US State Department's report, which stated that Egyptian detainees were "stripped and blindfolded; suspended from a ceiling or doorframe with feet just touching the floor; beaten with fists, metal rods, or other objects; doused with hot or cold water; flogged on the back; burned with cigarettes; and subjected to electrical shocks... forced to strip and threatened with rape".<sup>1</sup>

President Hosni Mubarak's much-delayed arrogant speeches inflamed the situation. The government's cosmetic reforms and slow response to few of the protesters' demands led them to realise that the only option left for change was wholesale regime change. Slogans in Tahrir Square changed accordingly to "Bread, Freedom, Social justice, Human Dignity" (*`Aish, Hurreya, `Adalah Egtema`eyah, Karama Insaniyah*).

This white revolution triumphed over 30 years of tyranny that Egyptians were subjected to, by a combination of the vision, technological expertise and perseverance of the youths, in addition – crucially – to the armed forces' tacit endorsement of their demands.





When we worried that the demonstrators would suffer from exhaustion, or that the protests could fizzle out, a number of events outraged public opinion – one came to be called “the battle of the camel”, on 2 February. A British paper’s disclosure that Mubarak had transferred abroad billions of dollars he had swindled, stoked their anger further. Wael Ghoneim’s public breakdown in tears, on a TV channel, moved people. He had just been released, after being arrested and kept blindfolded in solitary confinement for 12 days, shortly after the protests began. The Egyptian Google manager in Dubai and online activist had attracted the government’s wrath for launching a Facebook page in tribute to his cousin, Khaled Said, tortured and killed by two under-cover policemen, in broad daylight.

The demonstrators marched shouting “*Selmeyah! Selmeyah!*” (Peaceful! Peaceful!), waved our flag, and sang the national anthem in unison, “*Biladi, biladi*” (My country, my country). As they converged from Cairo’s various areas towards Tahrir Square, they appealed to the housewives on balconies to join them, and asked passers-by and shopkeepers to do the same. So, the crowds kept streaming to the square over the following days, and never lost their courtesy and humour.

For 18 long days, those who remained at home like me held their breath. But then, I have never been good at protest rallies. A few years ago, my friend Dr Afif Safieh, the former Palestinian ambassador to London, Washington and Moscow, called me, “an intellectual guerrilla”. I am still doing what I do best for my beloved Egypt: support – and garner support for – the legitimate fundamental rights of the people.

## The Unfolding Revolution

26.1.2011

The government disconnected the internet to prevent social networking sites being used to organise protests. Cellphones were suspended too. Ironically, this sent more people to the square, since they couldn’t exchange plans or instructions, while policemen were cut-off from each other. In retribution, Anonymous conducted cyber-attacks on several government sites. Egyptians abroad searched for third-party applications to enable some internet-users among the protesters to communicate with each other.

The EU foreign policy chief, Baroness Catherine Ashton, advised our government to solve the people’s problems and uphold their right to demonstrate for their political aspirations.

28.1.2011

Today was a tug-of-war between the police and the demonstrators – the bloodiest confrontation so far, with scores killed in violent clashes in several cities. Wave upon wave of protesters broke through police cordons, then were forced back by volleys of gas grenades and water-cannon. Despite the curfew, imposed today, they stormed Maspero, the state TV and radio building, and the foreign ministry. Their attempts to march on the prime minister’s office and parliament were thwarted. They set alight the headquarters (HQs) of the ruling NDP.

The most powerful image of the day – an iconic scene – was a solitary man barring a police truck from entering the square, despite its water-cannon smashing into him.



After the riot police was chased from Tahrir Square, they disappeared from all over Egypt. Some officers and men stayed behind, removed their uniforms and joined the demonstrators. The protesters then chanted “*wahed etnen el-geish el-Masri fen?*” (where is the Egyptian army?).

Mubarak demanded the cabinet’s resignation, and promised a new government. He also called in the army after the protesters called for his toppling, and tore down his and the NDP’s billboards. Tanks and troops surrounded the square, but remained on the sidelines.

In a televised address, US President Barack Obama said that he advised Mubarak to deliver on reforms. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged restraint on both sides, but was confident that the government was stable.

30.1.2011

A TV crew discovered 23 bodies in the Alexandria mortuary, shot by the police. Several had ghastly mutilated faces. One crushed skull clearly had a policeman’s shoe imprint on the face. Their families assembled there, screaming for retaliation against the police.

2.2.2011

We’re back to the Middle Ages. This is appalling. It was live on TV. I was stunned by this eerie real-life scene. It looked more like a movie. Thugs on horse-back and camel, bearing machetes and swords, stormed into the crowd. They hit at people haphazardly. Some were overpowered, torn from their saddles, and investigated by the people. They claimed they were hired by a very senior NDP member. Gamal Mubarak? One of his sycophants? To this day this horrible incident has not been investigated.

3.2.2011

For the past few days, I could hardly sleep... three hours at most, and found myself unable to do anything except watch quickly developing events, statements... interviews, both in Egypt and abroad, on television. The internet is back thanks to the new prime minister, Ahmad Shafiq. He seems trustworthy, but I am in a wait-and-see mode, despite his excellent career history, as Air Force Commander-in-Chief, then as Minister of Civil Aviation. He is reputed as being competent... an achiever, and his character is a mix of flexibility, i.e., ready to listen to others’ opinions and adopt them if they are applicable, while firm in firing under-performing people. We were seated next to each other at an official lunch, last July, and I found him polished, diplomatic and courteous, with a low-key sense of humour.

4.2.2011

Thank God for blessing me with many friends, even among my daughters’, and the family’s younger generation, who phone me daily, to make sure I am alright, safe, in need of nothing, offering their services, and also to pick my brain about developments, analysis and predictions... though in this extremely fluid situation – internally and internationally – when events move so quickly, no one can claim to foresee what is in the cards. My only thought was may God save Egypt from any mischievous forces – local or foreign – at this critical point.

I drove 60 km outside Alexandria to refuel my car and refill my grocery cupboard and the refrigerator. Most petrol stations are shut, while others had endless queues. Supermarkets in town overflow with customers, while shelves are emptying.



5.2.2011

A *New Yorker* article on the newly appointed Vice-President, Omar Suleiman, made for chilling reading. 'Bibi' [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] was overjoyed by news of his appointment. Mubarak's going-away 'present' to us was the perverse head of the feared *Mukhabarat* (Intelligence). Mubarak tried to throw us under the yoke of a sadistic leader, one worse than his master. He is said to have personally enjoyed supervising the torture of those 'renditioned' by the US, and even devised new ways to extricate confessions. There is a rumour that right before his removal he committed one unforgivable mistake. He used the direct phone line to the Israelis, and requested their 'intervention'! In what form, history may tell. Once the regime is toppled, hopefully, he should move to the US or to Israel. He will be highly appreciated there.

And yet, the Brotherhood leadership hurried to hold a meeting with him.

7.2.2011

Very few of the oligarchy, each of whom amassed billions of dollars illegally, will be prosecuted. Many more, from the lists I compiled, should be brought to justice. If found guilty, their fortunes, in Swiss banks, or elsewhere, should be returned to their rightful owner: Egypt. These could either pay back part of Egypt's foreign debt; or establish labour-intensive infrastructure projects and industrial and agricultural enterprises, especially in Sinai, that would absorb the hundreds of thousands of unemployed, or underemployed and underpaid youths; or substantially increase wages and create a fund for the jobless; or improve health and education.

10.2.2011

I am infuriated, nauseated, by Mubarak's speech. He has no shame, no pride. Netanyahu and his other supporters must have been cheering that his buddy is still at the helm.

11.2.2011

Finally! At hearing the news of Mubarak's capitulation, in a terse 50-word *communiqué* by Suleiman, I could not help but jump up and down, laughing and crying. I can once again be proud - very proud - of being an Egyptian. I am unbelievably happy that my country, hijacked so long ago, has been returned to me by these brave youngsters, who kept to their promise to march peacefully, despite attacks by criminal NDP thugs. They merely pelted stones in self-defence, but proved that they were stronger than one of the worst tyrannies.

Thank God for ridding Egypt of Mubarak's going-away 'present'. The youngsters also gave us an ex-president, which we have never had, except for the unfortunate General Mohamed Naguib, Egypt's first president after the 1952 military coup, who remained under house arrest until his death.

The Swiss Federation of Banks froze Mubarak's assets half an hour after he resigned. Bravo! I hope Egypt recalibrates its relations with other countries, based on their willingness to do the same. There are calls already to follow the Swiss example, but I wonder whether it makes a difference that Mubarak's wife and son are said to be British.

## Tahrir Square

The leaderships of the Islamist movements ordered their members to stay away, citing what they said was a religious admonition not to oppose one's ruler, even when corrupt. However, some



young members joined from the beginning, and their elders followed on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, when they finally realised how brittle Mubarak's government had become.

The demonstrations were peaceful, except when the protesters defended themselves with stones against the police and NDP *baltageyah* (thugs), armed with metal rods, stun grenades, Molotov cocktails and police truncheons. Bearded snipers on rooftops, overlooking Tahrir Square, targeted them with live fire and marble shards. Some say they were elements of Hamas and Hizbullah, or the *Ikhwan*'s (Brotherhood) militias. Those killed had bullet wounds to their heads and chests, or cracked skulls. Casualties are said to be about +800 dead and thousands injured, in addition to 1,000 disappeared.

The demonstrators neither carried anti-American posters, nor burnt Israeli or any other flags. While police thugs manhandled and arrested foreigners, protesters were friendly towards them, and never attacked hotels or foreign embassies. Islamic slogans were silenced, and modern-attired young women were having friendly discussions with bearded Islamists.

Egypt's streets were notorious for sexual harassment. None was reported.

In the beginning, the demonstrators were the educated middle- and upper middle-class computer-savvy male and female youths. As their movement gained popularity, they were joined by families from all walks of life, women of all ages, members of professional syndicates and labour unions, artists, football fans, and opposition politicians. The 'middle-class poor' – unemployed university graduates who earned their living as taxi drivers, cheap labour and street vendors – were in the square too (90% of the jobless and 60% of the population are under the age of 30). Thousands waved the Egyptian flag, and sang patriotic songs. Evenings, they listened to poets and singers, cracked jokes about Mubarak and his regime, and, more seriously, planned for their next steps.

They regularly swept the square and hired mini-trucks to take the garbage to the dumps.

Families brought home-cooked food, blankets, bottled water, masks, as well as food from delivery shops. Gifts of lemon and vinegar were greatly valued to treat from clouds of tear gas.

Doctors and surgeons, assisted by nurses, provided medical equipment and medicines, and set up several field hospitals across the square, the biggest in the well-known Omar Makram mosque and the nearby Kasr El Dobra Anglican church.

Homes surrounding the square allowed the girls to rest and use their bathrooms, while shops, *cafés* and restaurants gave away free food, and let the boys use their toilets. Later on, the activists refurbished the public toilets in the square. The sign on them read *Maqar al Hizb al Wati*, a play on words by removing the letter *noun* (meaning the HQs of the NDP).

Apart from those who shouted anti-Mubarak and anti-regime slogans, and demanded the banning of the NDP, the Egyptians' well-known sense of humour showed in their placards, such as, "Mubarak, leave, my wife is in labour and the baby doesn't want to see you", "Mubarak, leave, I miss my wife, I've been married for 16 days only", "Mubarak, I'm a carpenter, tell me what glue you use", "Suzanne, if you love him, take him away", "Mubarak, I've been holding this sign for too long, leave, my arm is hurting", "America has Batman and Spiderman, Egypt has Suleiman".





To signal that they will remain in the square until their demands were met, and that life would go on regardless, two *fiancés* had their marriage ceremony performed by a sheikh in the square, while the crowds cheered and offered their congratulations, along with sweets and sherbet.

The youths' inventiveness showed in many ways. They set up tents, mainly for female activists to sleep in and shelter from the winter rain and cold; connected to the street lights to charge their mobiles, or boil water for hot drinks; set up a supervised nursery, giving kids toys, colour pencils and paper; had water and food distribution centres, as well as garbage collection points, the latter with a humorous sign saying "NDP MPs"; and male demonstrators formed a circle to guard a "lost-and-found" display of scores of IDs, mobile phones, even cash and other objects. In fact, Tahrir Square became a well-organised mini-state.

Pope Shenouda, the head of the Coptic Church, called on his parishioners to stay away from the demonstrations. Even so, thousands of the young ones joined, in solidarity with their Muslim brethren. At prayer times, they held hands and encircled the Muslims, while the police and their thugs used water cannons, bludgeons, machetes and swords, live and rubber-coated bullets and tear-gas against them all. The Copts also helped pour water for their Muslim brethren's pre-prayer ablutions. And because loudspeakers were not sufficient to hear the words "*Allahu Akbar*", they repeated during prayers to sync their movements when they bend and prostrate, the young Copts relayed the words to those afar. (On 6 January, the Coptic Christmas eve, Muslim Egyptians held vigils, as human shields, at churches across Egypt, following the New Year's Eve massacre at the Church of The Two Saints in Alexandria's Sidi Bishr area.)

As a final act, the demonstrators cleaned the square, gave a 'bath and scrub' to the two giant lions' statues at the entrance of Kasr El Nil bridge, and painted the damaged walls and pavement stones.

Tahrir Square has been vacated by most. A score have remained. They are the families of those assassinated in the square, asking for their killers to be found, arrested and brought to justice, in addition to those of the 'disappeared', demanding that their whereabouts be revealed and they be released.

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12.2.2011

The TV channels I watched during the past 17 days - my criteria being objectivity and credibility - were *France 24* in French and English (Arabic was canceled), and *BBC World* (English and Arabic). Occasionally, I turned to *al-Jazeera International* (Arabic was canceled, then restored later), though it often aired news it denied later. *Al Arabiya* seemed to side with Mubarak, or wary about the democracy movement gaining ground. Statements by American senior officials on *CNN* were often contradictory, ambivalent, mirroring the dilemma they faced, namely, to side with the ideals of the revolutionaries, who demanded democracy, or respond to Israeli pressures. (Netanyahu was visibly rattled, during a press conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.)

I never watched Egyptian television, but will start now that the regime has fallen, and that the Minister of Information, Anas El Fegi, was removed. He reminded me of Saddam Hussein's El Sahhaf, at the time of the US-led invasion of Iraq. This post should be scrapped, and Egyptian state television and radio turned into a corporation, independent of government influence.

Israel allowed the Egyptian army to deploy some units to Sharm El Sheikh. Bibi sensed his buddy was about to move there.



13.2.2011

The Egyptian ambassador to London, Hatem Seif El-Nasr, was hosted on the Andrew Marr show on *BBC TV*. Although he made a good impression in replying to probing questions, I was furious. Asked whether Mubarak should be put on trial because of the billions he amassed and transferred abroad, he said that that was not the Egyptians' way – that we retained a certain deference towards our leaders. No one can have deference for a swindler-in-chief, who sucked Egypt's resources dry, and allowed his sons and their cohorts to embezzle in a grand manner, to terrorise the population, and to kill and maim with impunity.

I find it revolting that a *clique* skimmed off Egypt's resources, then boasted that our country's economy had grown in the past five years by 7.5%, under their stewardship. They never disclosed that half the population lived in abject poverty, or that the education and health 'services' could not be worse. The poor were forced to consult private doctors and pay for their medication, and also hire private tutors for their children. Private tuition fees in Egypt totaled approximately 5 billion Egyptian pounds (LE) last year, about \$850 million in current dollars. And Egypt has the highest number worldwide of Hepatitis C cases.

A 2009 International Labour Organisation survey found that wages in Egypt were among the lowest among the 72 countries examined. They were similar to those in Mexico and Thailand, and about one-third of Turkey's. Pay inequality is revolting too. University graduates' monthly wages were LE300, while some ministers' were receiving LE2 million, such as El-Adly. His deputies' salaries, and that of other senior police officers', were six digits, while policemen's on the beat were a mere couple of hundred. To make up for their low income, they terrorised small merchants and the poor to pay them 'mafia type protection' or a bribe to do their job.

\* \* \* \* \*

After 99 police stations were burnt down across the nation, in late-January, policemen vacated the rest, abandoned their weapons and vanished. Neighbourhood watches were established right away. In the evenings, fathers guarded the buildings, armed with iron pipes, wooden sticks, kitchen knives, and, in rare cases, licensed pistols or shotguns. From midnight on, the sons took over.

During the day, young men stood at street intersections. Traffic was never as regulated as then, and drivers cooperated fully. None tried to 'burn' a red traffic light, something unheard of for many years.

The army deployed tanks to sensitive areas. For instance, because I live about two hundred meters from the residence of the Alexandria governor and the Jewelry Museum on one side, and two presidential residences on the other, four tanks have kept us safe. When my daughters urged me to join them abroad, I laughed and said, "Do you have four battle tanks guarding your homes?"

Garbage collector trucks disappeared. Housewives and twenty-somethings and teenagers swept the streets, gathered the garbage in sacks and stacked them at street corners. As I drove by, I saw one of them, Safiyah, the daughter of the late prime minister of Egypt under the monarchy, Mahmoud Fahmy El-Nuqrashi Pasha. Upon seeing schoolboys and girls painting tramway stations and walls damaged by anti-Mubarak graffiti, I frequently stopped to hug and kiss them, wishing my grandchildren had been among them – not scattered in Canada, Brazil and Abu Dhabi. In some neighbourhoods, including mine, mini-trucks were hired to take the garbage to the dumps. The streets in some areas had never been cleaner.



Strikes are nationwide. In the past six years we had 2,500 organised protests – of which 1,400 took place in 2011 alone – and last year, 56 workers committed suicide. The one that caught the most attention was on 6 April 2008, in the industrial Delta city of Mehalla, when Mubarak's large poster was brought down and trampled. This was a first in our contemporary history. Most watched with disbelief, and not a few, with *Schadenfreude*. That is when the April 6 movement was born, founded by Ahmad Maher, a civil engineer, and the activists Esra' Abdel-Fattah and Bassem Fathy. Along with the Khaled Said movement, it became one of the revolution's engines.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), who are governing now, suspended the Constitution, dissolved the two Chambers, ordered the prosecution of a number of corrupt senior officials, froze their assets, and prevented former officials from traveling abroad.

15.2.2011

E-mail traffic is intense. People are keen to exchange information about the revolution, newly-composed patriotic songs and poems, slogans, photos of people in the square and elsewhere across Egypt. Everyone is speculating about what the future might hold. There is also an avalanche of reports I had received earlier, listing the financial assets of the businessmen-politicians, and how they amassed them, that need to be looked into and discussed with others.

But this has to wait.

I am engaged in a task that takes priority. The ill-advised, ill-timed referendum is a mere four days away. Liberals and intellectuals are convinced that a new constitution has to be written first, after which parliamentary and presidential elections can take place. We have got to institutionalise our body politic and create a law and order state, based on solid foundations. The SCAF decided otherwise: nine constitutional amendments that people had to vote on in a mere fortnight, followed by elections.

Wherever I went during those two short weeks, I explained to people why they had to attend and vote 'No' – government offices, companies, student meetings, petrol stations, shops, and the Alexandria Sporting Club, where I met people of my generation and social standard. At home, I sent messages by e-mail and SMS, and campaigned on the phone for hours.

16.2.2011

TV aired graphic footage of torture rooms in police stations, including Alexandria's Hay Sharq, showing the instruments used against people. They were a poor replica of those I saw in the London Tower's torture chambers, with a 'modern' addition – electrical prods.

Khaled Said's beating to death, last June, was one of the sparks that led to the revolution. In the aftermath, as I drove along the sea front, I saw several long single lines of young men and women, all dressed in black, standing silently, facing the sea, some reading from their *Qurans*. Newspapers carried their photographs. Egyptians were deeply moved by this voiceless demonstration of anger and grief. It was an eye-opener. A new opposition movement was born, and became part of the core of the 25<sup>th</sup> January protest organisers.

Families now speak openly about what their sons suffered at the hands of the police and state security agencies. They were muzzled by the perpetrators of those crimes, with threats of retribution. One of them was my husband's grand-nephew. He was a jolly fun-loving fellow, and had absolutely no political activities. He was picked up, one night, on his way home. For ten days,



his mother did not know of his whereabouts, until she contacted her cousin, a close friend of Suzanne Mubarak. He was released, on condition that he and his family never reveal what happened during his detention. For quite a while, the young man seemed psychologically broken, his sense of humour gone.

18.2.2011

When the Museum of Antiquities was broken into, at the start of the revolution, Zahi Hawass, the head of the Antiquities Department, first alleged that nothing was stolen, so the army saw no urgency to guard it. Later on, he admitted that several pieces had disappeared, though he did not say they were highly valuable and irreplaceable. I am devastated. It reminded me of Iraq, at the start of its occupation, when its museum was ransacked too.

News in the British press said that constructors were working in the basement of the Mubarak 5-storey house in Mayfair. Prior to that, Suzanne had arrived in a private jet with 97 pieces of luggage. This looks like a private 'bank vault' being built for what she carried over.

23.2.2011

I sent an email to shababaltahrir, saying,

*"Dear revolutionaries,*

*I have watched, with trepidation, your revolution, which prompted me to write a diary, extending from the 25<sup>th</sup> of January to the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, in which I described my emotions, my opinions, my fears and my hopes. If you're interested to read it, following is the link, which you are free to forward.*

*<http://www.peoplesworld.org/egypt-s-revolution-diary-of-an-intellectual-guerilla/>*

*I love you all. You gave us back our dignity, our pride to say I'm a free Egyptian. May God save you from the ill-winds of any counter-revolution".*

1.3.2011

I registered at the police station for first time as a voter. It took less than three minutes. The NDP and the Brotherhood are the only well-organised institutions. Liberal democrats will have to vote, *en masse*. We do not want the presidency nor our next parliament to be monopolised by them.

4.3.2011

One of my daughter's former classmates phoned several times. He was frantic. His flat overlooks a state security building. Protesters broke in, after the officers set some rooms on fire, and escaped with scores of sacks of documents. The intruders found heaps of shredded paper and a trove of secret documents incriminating public figures, lists of *Ikhwan* informants, of judges who rigged elections, some still smouldering. They caused sensation when some were published on the social networks. They also discovered a shallow grave in the courtyard. This happened at several other state security offices across Egypt, at the exact same time. The NDP and the Brotherhood are the only ones with the organisational capabilities to pull off an operation on such a scale.

7.3.2011

Prime Minister Essam Sharaf reshuffled his cabinet, removing Mubarak-era ministers. I sent a congratulatory email to the new foreign minister, Nabil Elaraby, whom I met in New York, when he served as our UN Head of Mission. He replaced my maternal cousin, Ahmed Aboul-Gheit.



9.3.2011

Former French President Jacques Chirac is in court over his misuse of public funds, way back, when he was mayor of Paris. Egypt, with its millenarian-long civilisation and its judicial edifice, should demand of foreign governments to freeze the Mubaraks' assets and return them. They must be held accountable and punished for defrauding our people, and not remain above the law.

Yesterday marked International Women's Day. When the Military Council appointed the Constituent committee, it was far from representative of the Egyptian population. In addition to being heavy with elements clearly following a particular ideology, it neither had Christians nor women. Tahani El-Gebaly, the Deputy Head of the Constitutional Court, should have been the custodian of women's views and needs.

18.3.2011

Today, the imams of mosques used the Friday prayers to mobilise people. This is a graphic breach of the law. Seculars and intellectuals, who plan to vote 'No', have respected the government's diktat not to campaign 48 hours prior to the referendum. Choosing a Saturday for the vote was suspect. The military were certain that the Islamists would have a field day, threatening the 'No' voters with eternal damnation, and promising the 'Yes' voters the right of passage to heaven.

Sobhi Saleh, one of the five members of the Constituent committee, held at least two political rallies in Alexandria, to convince people to vote 'Yes'. The first was in a poor area called Abou-Soliman, which my cleaner attended. She was happy with the cash she got, in addition to a bag of oil, rice and sugar.

One of my daughter's friends told me that the same took place in the upper-scale quarter where she lives. This must have happened elsewhere across Egypt, with the military unwilling to implement their ban. With 40% of the population living beneath the poverty line, I cannot blame them. It would have been lovely if they took the groceries and cash and voted 'No'. Wishful thinking!

The amendments were ordered by Mubarak and fell short of the revolutionaries' demands. The coalition between the NDP and the Brotherhood are the ones who will vote 'Yes', in addition to the Salafis and the uninitiated they were able to brainwash or 'buy'.

19.3.2011

Today is referendum day. I have barely slept, waiting for the sun to pierce through the curtains. I was euphoric. My mental faculties were in suspended animation. I am a (very politicised) grandmother of four grandchildren at university, yet, I am voting for the first time! I met with a neighbour in the garage, and we left at 0815, queued for half an hour, were back home at 0910, for coffee and croissants. Very large participation rate, it seems. Especially people like us. Old ladies with walking sticks, who could hardly walk, were let through ahead. For the first time in about six decades, we did not know the outcome of the vote in advance.

As soon as I was given the voting document, my 'analysis antenna' leapt. I was struck by its design: the word 'Yes' was surrounded by a thick green ring – the colour of Islamist and NDP banners. The word 'No' was encircled by black – in these parts the colour of evil, of Satan, and of bad guys' horses and hats in cowboy movies. Green is equated with goodness among our people, as when





someone wishes another *sanah khadra* (a green year, a profitable year). And they use the curse words *sanah sodah* (black year) to wish somebody ill.

Now, I was sure that the army generals were in cahoots with the Brotherhood and/or Mubarak's NDP. A marriage in hell, or *un ménage à trois*? Will our next ruler turn out to be an Islamist wearing camouflage, or an officer draped in a green cloak? The combination of Islamism and militarism can become a potent danger, I fear.

I recorded some facts that should have disqualified the referendum:

Some stations had no booths or curtained private space for voters.

Some voting forms were not stamped at the back, which invalidates the paper.

Some stations did not have the purple indelible ink.

The room for the seniors, in the station where I voted, did not have boxes, and the voting forms had to be handed to the officials there. Hmm!

The vote-counting was done in each individual station without the presence of independent observers or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the results were not made public there.

These are but a few observations. It could be incompetence, nonchalance, or collusion. It became clear now that the power-hungry Islamists will take over, that they will use the tools of democracy to wrest control, then cancel them, and cling onto power. *Hamas*, the *Ikhwan*'s Palestinian offshoot, never held elections after they got the majority in the Gaza Strip.

19 March 2011 will live in my memory as the birth – and death – of democracy in Egypt.

20.3.2011

The *Ikhwan* and the Salafis did not appear in quarters where well-to-do people reside. They did not show up in Zizinia, where I live, but they did where my driver and my cleaner have their homes – in the poorer, run-down parts around the cities, where votes were bought. In Anfoushy, an old part of town that had seen better days, close to the navy HQs and main base, they plastered posters at the entrance of the voting stations promising heaven to people who vote 'Yes', in full view of the authorities who turned a blind eye to this breach of the law.

21.3.2011

It is Mothers' Day today in Egypt, and coincides with the birthday of my youngest granddaughter, Baheya. It would have been a day of joy, when my daughters and grandchildren would phone or visit. Nevertheless, since yesterday evening, when the results were made public, I have been in a state of anti-climax, complete depression, 'unbalancement', disbelief that all we got was 22.8%.

22.3.2011

Why was the Military Council in cahoots with the *Ikhwan*, I ask myself? After all, they were not the ones who started this revolution and only joined on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January. The youth, who originally filled Egyptian squares and streets – and took the brunt of the police thugs' attacks, lost friends, limbs, or eyes – have been totally marginalised, while the *Ikhwan*, along with the SCAF, literally hijacked their revolution. The young are furious, and rightly so. They know they cannot possibly compete with the NDP or the *Ikhwan* in the coming parliamentary elections, so soon. They are far from being organised for the post-revolution phase. With the time-frame given by the SCAF, there is no way they can be ready to run. They are enthusiastic and hardworking, but they need to create their own parties, get funding, and campaign across Egypt, and the clock is ticking. Sadly, those who won the referendum were not the ones who led the revolution.



From what I have been hearing from members of the various youth movements, our democracy is at risk if the *Ikhwān* or the military rule us. They have fought for transparency, accountability. The fight for the rights they have called for is far from secured. The revolution must continue, and we have a lot to do even if we are discouraged now.

## The Military

I am what one would call an ‘insider’ when it comes to the military. I grew up surrounded by five maternal uncles and two aunts’ husbands, all among the high brass in various services of the military. Then, I married an officer, and our social circle was predominantly navy. I regarded this institution as my extended family, and was considered as such, even after my husband passed away. I trusted it all the way.

But the referendum changed that. The scales dropped from my eyes, and, day by day, I found myself joining the revolutionaries in their indictment of the armed forces’ actions. I started looking into their abuses, and commented on them. Many of my friends and relatives found that incredible. Time and again, I saw disbelief in their eyes, almost as if they suspected me of being part of a fifth column.

In the early days of the revolution, the army set up a torture and detention centre in the Museum of Antiquities at the edge of the square. Young men and women were snatched and taken there. While the men were tortured to confess they had been paid, the young women were subjected to the shameful practice of forced ‘virginity tests’. By God! I would have shot those responsible, had any of my daughters been in Egypt, in the square, and lived through that. Only one of them, Samira Ibrahim, had the moral courage and her father’s encouragement to take the military to court for sexual assault. The rest are unknown. So far, justice has not been served against anyone.

Whenever an opportunity arose, I brought this obscene subject up – with two senior officers and three mid-level ones, each separately. All recited the same text, like robots, word-for-word, “these girls aren’t like yours or mine. They camped in tents with male protesters in Tahrir Square”. It was a macabre performance. This was the aging generals’ way of saying they would not tolerate dissent.

It is worth noting that the Islamist-dominated 2012 constitution shielded the military from civilian oversight, and granted them unprecedented autonomy over their economic assets. And Morsi buried a report that he had commissioned, the year before, published in the *Guardian*, about the military’s abuses. “Officers allegedly killed, tortured and abducted Egyptians during the 2011 uprising... senior army doctors were ordered to operate without anaesthetic on wounded protesters at a military hospital in Cairo during protests against military rule in May 2012” (12 April 2013).

The military built up a vast economic empire. They own military and civilian factories, farms, real estate, such as beach resorts, shops, restaurants, and large tracts of prime land across Egypt, in addition to housing for officers. I own a flat in such a building, along with 149 officers’ families.

I presume that they favour a presidential government, aligned with them – preferably a strong president coming out of the armed forces’ womb. A parliamentary government, and a president stripped of the prerogatives that Mubarak enjoyed, would have a prime minister, appointed according to his party’s parliamentary majority. It would likely jeopardise their empire, by insisting



on disclosing the military budget, and may question their managerial efficiency. The military also has its own courts.

In the US, the defence budget is the one that attracts the most analysis and criticism by the Congress, scholars and members of the press alike. That is unheard of in Egypt. The military will fight tooth and nail to keep its budget secret. So, it comes down to money, how much of it, and with whom it ends up with.

The upper echelons of the Egyptian military seem to have a warm relationship with America. They are pampered and have been allowed – almost encouraged – to develop their own economic empire. Better to keep them busy in business rather than in war or political scheming. Commentators have sensed that Washington would welcome ‘their man in Egypt’ to be one of them. “Would the US encourage an Islamist president?”, I was asked by a colleague. “Out of the question”, was my instinctive response. I found out later how wrong I was.

It was rumoured that the middle and lower ranks of the armed forces were unhappy with the idea of removing Mubarak and switching their support to the protesters. When the tanks were first deployed in Tahrir Square, troops stood idly by, watching, while the protesters’ stone-throwing continued, unabated, on the one hand, and on the other, Mubarak’s gangs fired rubber and live bullets and threw Molotov cocktails. When two of their tanks were burnt by Molotov cocktails, they joined the revolutionaries, who embraced them. “*El-geish wel-Sha`b eid wahda*” (the army and the people are one hand) became the ‘flavour of the day’.

An added incentive was the resentment among the military *vis-à-vis* the police forces. Last year, their budget exceeded that of the military. Professional jealousy? Of course! But their animosity is not new, and has always been there. The budget issue may have exacerbated it.

The army’s reputation had suffered in the last years among Egyptians, who have seen it loyal to a regime that is bent on securing Israel rather than Egypt. By switching sides, the military seized the opportunity to change the people’s perception of itself.

At the start of the revolution, General Sami `Anan, the Army Chief of Staff, was in Washington, accompanied by a military delegation. He decided to return to Egypt immediately. However, he was asked to have a meeting at the Pentagon before taking his flight. What was agreed upon during those deliberations is a moot question.

TV stations were allowed to film a glimpse of the SCAF meeting, which Mubarak headed – for the last time – after the revolutionaries chanted “The people and the army are one hand”. `Anan was all smiles and fidgety, far from his usual self, not the poised man I used to see at official functions. He is less devoted to Mubarak than Marshall Hussein Tantawi, who is elderly and in ill-health. He is the man to watch now, and I anticipate that he will be our *de-facto* ruler.

Some suspect that Mubarak ordered a military attack on the demonstrators. I do not have any briefing on that, but suspect that he wanted to do so, pushed by Gamal and his mother, as well as the son’s *entourage*. Phone calls from senior members of the US Defense and State departments to their counterparts may have prevented that. Or the lower ranks of officers and their enlisted men balked at it. Let’s remember, since Mohamed Ali Pasha founded it, the army has never turned its guns on the people.

The armed forces leadership rejected the idea of Gamal taking over after his father. At official ceremonies, I saw him treating cabinet ministers and senior officers with arrogance, which left



some chafing. Since 1952, all presidents came from among their ranks, and Gamal had not even done military service. They were in an impasse about how to abort the inheritance plan. There were even rumours that next September, when presidential elections were due, a *coup d'état* was being planned, if Mubarak senior were to step down in favour of his son.

Many Egyptians also felt insulted that their country and its people were taken for granted and treated as a private property, to be handed down. In the meantime, the youngsters were mobilising people on Facebook and Twitter, by SMS and emails, on phones and in meetings. No one can convince me that the intelligence agencies were not monitoring all of this. And they kept mum.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2011, the top brass threw us into the Islamists' lap, fearing their threats that they would rampage through the country, on a "scorched earth" campaign. They gave what they did not own to those who did not deserve. A 'safe exit' was all that our military leaders cared for, in return. How shameful! What a disgrace! In Egypt, we treasure what is called "*haybah*". It can be loosely translated into a blend of personal dignity and self-respect. It is built into our psyche, and assumed to be understood by all. Even a street-cleaner expects his *haybah* to be acknowledged by his family, his neighbours, shop-owners in his neighbourhood. In short, by everybody. So, where was our senior officers' *haybah*? What an inglorious end to a career. Had they not colluded with the Islamists, we would have been spared what we have endured since then.

After the Maspero and Mohamed Mahmoud Street violence, I was asked by the wife of a senior member of the military council to defend them and not criticise them. My reply was clear: "I won't go against my conscience, and if they want my support, they should avoid wrongdoing". I did disapprove of the leadership publicly and in exchanges with others, when they deserved it. Now, I am giving a clear message: I am no longer part of that family.

\* \* \* \* \*

11.4.2011

Prime Minister Sharaf agreed that Egyptians abroad participate in the parliamentary and presidential elections. Congrats to all the 7-8 million Egyptians abroad. I emailed my friends and relatives world-wide, asking them anxiously to register at the Egyptian consulates to participate. I also emailed people at home, hoping they would forward it to their relatives and friends abroad. Only one-third of a million registered, the majority of whom were in the Gulf region, and we know whom they will elect. What a shame!

13.4.2011

Tunisia approved the equal membership of women in the National Constituent Assembly. Egypt's women are not less capable than Tunisia's. We will not remain silent while the military – by its very nature male-dominated – ignores the potential input we women could have. Let us all act before it is too late. Let us make our voices heard, and demand our right to have a say in Egypt's future.

14.4.2011

A chart of the referendum results by numbers and percentages by governorates showed a clear correlation between high literacy and 'No' votes.

15.4.2011

It is no secret that successive US administrations had a preference for stability over democracy in Arab states. They favoured dealing with dictators. When an Arab ruler had a meeting in the Oval



Office, and given instructions, they knew these would be carried out without question. On the other hand, when the Israeli leader – whoever he was – met with any US president, he invariably protested, saying he had a constituency to think of, and the survival of his government's coalition to consider.

However, a number of young Egyptian activists were given scholarships by American organisations for short-term courses on democracy and peaceful change in the US and elsewhere. Dr Mustafa Hegazy, who rose to become the transitional president's policy advisor in 2013, took a similar course in Serbia.

17.4.2011

I sent a letter to a friend who is in almost daily contact with the Tahrir youngsters: *"You say they're hard-working. Tell them to work even harder now. Removing Mubarak was the easy part. Mobilising people in the rural areas, in the upper Egyptian villages – some of whom are not yet aware that Mubarak has gone – and in squatter settlements around cities, is the challenging part. It will be an exhausting task. Tell them not to wear any expensive clothes when they get there, nor drive posh cars. This would set off envy. First impressions are very important. When they talk to them they should use their vernacular. They'll have to explain why they shouldn't vote for the remnants of the NDP, why religion shouldn't interfere in politics, why they should stop saying 'Yes', now that they have a free choice, and why they should have the dignity not to 'sell' their vote, because it's much more valuable than a banknote, or a meal, or a bag of groceries. This won't need much funds, only a great deal of good will and patience.*

*They're right to wish to be represented in the post-revolution government. As a beginning, they could ask for the Minister of Youth and Sports portfolio, or be named under-secretaries in ministries to learn the duties, the daily nitty-gritty. They could join new or old political parties and be content – for the time being – of being foot soldiers. Far from suggesting that they be sidelined, the signs of which are already clear, they should bide their time and learn about politics, its dynamics, its mechanisms, coalition-making, the skills of negotiating, the talent of speech-making, etc.*

*Please tell them that a grandmother, whose generation and the generation of her children failed to do what they did, is thankful for what they achieved".*

18.4.2011

A friend sent me an email, objecting to the appointment of retired military and police generals as new governors. Sure, we are all fed-up with the military heading everything since President Gamal Abdel-Nasser's time. There was even a joke, then, that the best bet for a young man was to join the military academy, which would enable him, one day, to become an ambassador, or head of a company, or a governor, or a minister, or even the president.

However, right now, with the security situation in flux, I think that it is not a bad decision – provided that in future, only those who have lived in the governorates are elected by the people – not appointed by the president.

14.5.2011

Although the NDP and the *Wafd* tried to coopt me on several occasions, I declined. Now, as we face a new era, I joined a liberal party, *Almasriyeen Alahrar* (Free Egyptians).





15.5.2011

There are Saudi behind-the-curtain attempts to let Mubarak off the hook. They cut off hands of people who rob a hundred Riyals, and want us to forgive him for the embezzlement of billions of dollars from his own people. They should not be left to enjoy those ill-begotten riches and live in opulence for ever after.

Corruption has spread country-wide horizontally and filtered down to the lowliest person. The Mubaraks' *entourage* got billions in loans from banks without proper guarantees, did not pay them back, and transferred the cash abroad, when they should have invested it in Egypt, and created jobs for the hundreds of thousands of unemployed who live in abject poverty.

The Mubaraks have saddled us with unpardonable problems. Putting all the Mubaraks on trial is the only insurance we have to deter any future president from attempting to swindle the country and its people.

16.5.2011

It would have been useful, as a counterbalance to the Islamists, if members of the armed forces had been allowed to vote in the coming elections. However, General Mamdouh Shahin, a member of the SCAF, and an *Ikhwan* sympathiser, said that this was not to be.

29.7.2011

Egyptians were appalled at seeing the Islamists' green banners, and a couple of black ones too, along Saudi flags, hoisted in Tahrir Square. Al-Qaeda's tentacles have reached Egypt! Since then, we have called it "the Friday of Kandahar".

3.8.2011

The "trial of the century", as proclaimed by the media, started today. Mubarak is accused of failing to stop the killing of protesters before he stepped down. Over 800 people were killed and more than double that number injured in the 18-day revolt that transfixed the world. He was wheeled into the huge cage on a gurney. He is also charged with corruption, along with his two sons, Alaa and Gamal, who stood beside him. The former Interior Minister and several of his assistants sat apart on benches. The sheet of accusation was far too lengthy, shallow rhetoric, weak evidence. I sensed they will be acquitted.

9.10.2011

Tonight's scene in front of Maspero was gruelling. Coptic Christians had been demonstrating peacefully, joined by Muslim sympathisers, over the destruction of a building used for worship, and the authorities' refusal to allow them to build new churches. State TV claimed that Copts had killed a soldier, and called upon "honest citizens" to come to the troops' rescue. Mayhem ensued. Independent TV stations showed an armoured personnel carrier plowing into the protesters. As a result of the brutal crackdown, 27 Copts were killed, one of them crushed by the carrier. (At a later date, three soldiers were indicted for manslaughter, and imprisoned for three years.)

15.11.2011

We are on the way to the dark ages! Bearded demonstrators tried to burn the Bibliotheca Alexandrina - our home of enlightenment, an addition to our national patrimony, and the pride of our city.



21.11.2011

Mohamed Mahmoud Street, which leads to the Interior Ministry, is the scene of violent clashes. People are choking on a new type of teargas. Snipers are at work. So far, 42 have been martyred, 49 lost their eyesight, and 60 were being treated in one hospital only, with pellets or gunshots to their eyes. The Tahrir men and women renamed it “Eyes of Freedom Street”.

28.11.2011

Parliamentary elections to the lower house begin today. They are the first since the fall of Mubarak. Egypt is divided into 27 governorates, and parliamentary elections will be in nine provinces at a time, two weeks apart. There will be a re-run in constituencies where no candidate got 50% of the vote, a week later. Final results will be announced on 13 January 2012.

Across Egypt, Islamists queued in front of the polls right after dawn prayers! Voters arrived to find hundreds of them already lined up. This put off many from waiting, thinking it will take forever, and quit.

2.12.2011

Many here and elsewhere in Arab states who had regime-changes were discussing whether one should adopt the ‘Turkish Model’. The growth of its economy from a low in 2002 to what it has achieved is what makes it so attractive. But its human rights, and the treatment meted out to journalists, activists, intellectuals, and particularly to Kurds, is kept undercover.

23.12.2011

Yesterday, I came across an article on the internet, which described the army’s violence against the demonstrators. I thought it was about the recent events on Mohamed Mahmoud Street. The date was the third week of February 2011! As the French say, *plus ça change plus c’est la même chose*.

What is happening cannot be worse. I cried when I saw the Science Academy burning. Anarchists, on someone’s payroll, wanted to tar the protesters’ image. Recorded testimonies by witnesses on the scene, and mobile phone photos, are pouring in and will eventually uncover the truth. I am absolutely sure that the brave Tahrir men and women would never set fire to what they know to be part of our heritage. In the early days of the revolution, when arsonists tried to torch the Antiquities Museum, they formed a cordon and defended the building with their bodies.

As a human being and mother of three daughters, the horribly humiliating violence meted out to the “blue bra” girl was revolting. It was followed by the women’s demonstration, guarded on both sides by lines of men. It was a reminder of their grandmothers’ participation in the 1919 uprising. I am glad it rattled the SCAF, who issued a hollow *communiqué*, in which they did not even apologise. Cartoons appeared of officers and soldiers, thrashed with brooms, pans and slippers by their womenfolk, as they returned home.

“I’m glad my father is dead”. I was shocked by what my daughter said on the phone, knowing how she adored him. She went on to explain, “He would’ve been heartbroken to see how disgraceful his comrades-in-arms were behaving. What a shame that they’re doing to their Egyptian brethren what they dare not do to the Israelis”. She and her daughter participated in demonstrations in Toronto, and signed a statement demanding the troops withdraw to their barracks, and leave governing to civilians.



## 2012

5.1.2012

We all need to look at our inner selves and harness our anger into strength to reach our goals, even in day-to-day life. This enables us to think clearly. Yet, if the revolutionaries contain their resentment, and channel it to bring about change, but are faced with state violence, as the past two months, what then? Their exasperation will explode, and sweep away their self-control. There is too much pent-up anger and frustration, generated – not only by the past 60 years – but also by the last 11 months’ prevarication, collusion with internal and external actors, incompetence, clumsiness, and misreading conditions on the ground.

13.1.2012

The newly-founded Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the political arm of the *Ikhwan*, won a majority of 47% in parliament. The Salafis came second with 24%. The secular liberals who sparked the revolution were crushed.

14.1.2012

“Egypt’s hardline Islamists and secular parties in rare talks to balance Brotherhood power”, is the title of an article in today’s *Washington Post*. I hope they reach an agreement. That will put their credibility on the line, *vis-à-vis* those who voted for them, and especially their hard-core supporters. They fear the *Ikhwan* will hijack parliament, and have a free hand in appointing the Speaker and heads of the 19 committees. By having a coalition, even a temporary one, the Salafis, with their partners, would ensure having a slice of the cake. I am also counting on their deceit being exposed, when they are forced to vote in parliament for policies they claimed to be against.

23.2.2012

Saad El-Katatni, the FJP’s leader, was elected Speaker, by a vote of 399 to 97. It was a watershed moment for the organisation that was banned three times in its 84-year history – under the monarchy, Nasser and Mubarak.

24.2.2012

Parliament has allowed live coverage of its sessions by TV stations. There were five women only, the lowest number ever (2%). When they campaigned, one of them had a rose on her posters, instead of her photo, and another had her husband’s name instead of hers. Women’s status regressed.

It was shocking how the new MPs were behaving. At one instance, Mamduh Ismail, a Salafi, demanded a recess so that members answer his call to prayers! Incredible! He refused to stand up for the Egyptian national anthem, but jumped to his feet for the American anthem, when he attended a 4<sup>th</sup> of July function.

Another MP, the Minister of Education, Mohamed El-Kordi, tabled a motion to “Arabise” the study of medicine and engineering. After parliament was dissolved, and he joined the Constituent committee, he demanded to add an article in the new constitution, saying that it would become mandatory to “Arabise” all science studies.

When we all know that our country has many needs, that services are degraded, that security is lacking, some MPs called for the segregation of universities, as in Saudi Arabia, where, by the way, a new co-ed university has been opened. Others have said that females should not seek education nor employment, as in Afghanistan, since their only *raison d’être* will be child-producing machines.



They are unaware that many families cannot survive financially unless both parents work, and that many young men seek marriage with educated working young women.

While Egypt's economy was in free fall, they discussed the imposition of beards, saying they are Sunnah – mandatory, in imitation of the Prophet Mohamed. A sly voice inside me wondered, what if Gillette blades were available at the time of early Islam?

Income from the Suez Canal is our top foreign currency earner, which drops with the economic down-turn in trading countries. Second come remittances of Egyptians abroad – the numbers of whom have shrunk with events in Libya, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain, Sudan, Syria, the policy of Saudisation in the Kingdom, the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, the anti-immigration laws in Western states, and other turmoil in host countries.

Tourism is the third largest. It is the engine of 17 other economic activities. One in seven Egyptians work in tourism. This does not only include 5-star hotels, antiquity sites and beaches only, but also involves millions of camel, taxi, coach and cart drivers, small souvenir shops, grocers and greengrocers, farmers, restaurants, clothes manufacturers and boutiques, Khan-el-Khalili craftsmen, guides, swimming and diving instructors, waiters and cleaning men and women. MPs called for the prohibition of bikinis on beaches, the interdiction of alcohol production and sales, segregated beaches, and women forced to be veiled, as in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan!

This, instead of presenting a workable plan that would effectively improve Egyptians' living conditions. The majority are young, eager to live with dignity. Personal matters should be left to individuals who will answer to God on Judgment Day. Matters of state and the people's well-being should be of major concern to those in government.

The Afghani Taliban, the Somali Shabab, the Sudanese Islamists did not succeed in pulling their countries out of the basket-case predicament they are in. Were it not for their petro-dollars, Islamist-run countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, would not continue to be viable.

25.2.2012

After Mubarak and his sons were arrested, and Suzanne investigated, Riyadh said it would pay Egypt \$4 billion in aid. This is a *diyyah*, a bedouin customary payment for damage, including even murder. The \$1 billion for each Mubarak head. To date, they have only disbursed \$500 million, probably awaiting the court sentences.

29.2.2012

I emailed a friend: *"While you mentioned secret Saudi and Qatari funding to our Islamists, there's another related issue that needs examining, namely, the legal basis of Gama`at Al Ikhwan. I watched a TV discussion, where one of them implied that the Gama`ah was above the law. He refused arrogantly to register at the Ministry of Social Welfare, in violation of Egyptian law, to avoid scrutiny of their funding sources. We rid ourselves of a secular dictatorship to end up being subjected to a theocratic one, also above the law."*

*The SCAF has to understand that there can't be any double standards concerning foreign funding and meddling in our internal politics. They must take action against the Ikhwan, and stand firm against the Gulf Arabs".*



21.3.2012

Names of presidential candidates are bandied around. Some of those hopefuls are being discredited. The Military Council and the *felool* (remnants of the toppled regime) seem to be endorsing Ahmad Shafiq. We need a Mandela, someone with a clean slate, an incorruptible man of trust who would bring people together, for the sake of a prosperous, sovereign Egypt, of an Egypt whose policies are independent of Washington and Gulf Arabs. But none of these would wish us to be ruled by a man of integrity and moral courage.

22.3.2012

At a seminar I attended today in London, some said that Qatar was filling a political vacuum caused by the Arab revolts, aspiring to replace Egypt as the leader of the Arab states. What *effronterie!* The gist of my question – after listing Qatar’s involvement in various Arab states – was that this tiny post-stamp country could not be but a cat’s paw, so who’s the cat? None of the three speakers was able, or willing, to answer!

24.3.2012

Our best-known political activists, anchormen and women, and other celebrities – opponents of the SCAF and the *Ikhwan* – were served with warrants to appear at the District Attorney’s office. The timing is suspicious. It is to silence opposition ahead of the presidential elections, or getting us enmeshed in marginal issues, away from any deals they are concocting.

1.4.2012

A *New York Time*’s article is entitled “Islamist Group Breaks Pledge to Stay Out of Race in Egypt”. I dare anybody to be able to count how many times the *Ikhwan* went back on their word.

4.4.2012

I received a photo taken after World War II, when Egypt made substantial donations of food and funds to the Gulf nations, some of which were facing starvation. Prince Faysal Ibn Abdel-Aziz (later Saudi King) is seen standing on the right of King Farouq (seated), while the Kuwaiti emir stands on his left. Protocol did not permit princes to sit in the presence of the King of Egypt. Now, these same are said to be spending lavishly on the Salafis, hoping to abort our revolution, in fear of becoming a model for their people; or get Egypt governed by Wahhabis, and turn that once proud country into their compliant vassal.

I read an article entitled “Mubarak Cronies Find Comfort in Exile”, about the ministers who fled abroad in the early days of the revolution. A while ago, at a meeting at the London School of Economics, Egyptian students heckled former Finance Minister Boutros Ghali. The Egyptian Embassy in London sent several requests to the British authorities to hand him over, and freeze and repatriate the Mubaraks’ and their cronies’ money. But it seems that Britain and other countries, saddled with economic problems, ‘find comfort’ in having these funds in their banks.

11.4.2012

Salafism is very strong in Marsa Matrouh and the north-western coast. This has shown in all referenda and elections. When I was there, one summer, I was struck by the number of women wearing the *niqab*. I had never seen that phenomenon in any other Egyptian city.

As for the growth of Salafism in Alexandria, look no further than the faculties of Medicine and Engineering, where it sprouted and mushroomed. One of my daughters, and two of my sons-in-





law graduated from Engineering, and said students get brain-washed there. Salafis also proselytise among those doing military service.

24.4.2012

Many share my worry about what Egypt will become if it is governed by an *Ikhwan* president, alongside an Islamist-dominated parliament, and a parliament-appointed Islamist cabinet – especially after the MPs’ poor performance. Will the criteria for appointments be religious affiliation, not expertise? Will Egypt turn into another Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, or Somalia? How will that affect arts and tourism? Many here remember how the Salafis wrapped a statue of sea-nymphs with cloth in a main square in Sidi Bishr, in east Alexandria, and how the Taliban destroyed the two giant Buddhas. These are but the most graphic examples. Egypt was the cultural ‘lighthouse’ of the region. What will become of that?

Just a month prior to presidential elections, Egypt has denied the Carter Center and seven other American civil society groups from monitoring, on the grounds that this would be an encroachment on our sovereignty. History is repeating itself!

17.5.2012

Last week, I voted for Hamdeen Sabbahi, at our London embassy, where I am registered. He presented his programme way back in March 2011. Since then, I have watched his statements and those of other candidates, keeping my mind open as to whom I will give my vote to. It became a matter of exclusion, the last of which lately, after the humiliating visit of some presidential candidates to Riyadh, to apologise for the protests in front of their Cairo embassy.

Amr Moussa was another candidate. He served ten years as foreign minister, then became secretary-general of the Arab League. He and I mutually respect each other, and, had he run for president in the 1990s, I would have voted for him. But we need a younger president, one with enough stamina to bail our country out of the morass it is in. I am fed-up with the civilian and military gerontocracy that has been in charge of Egypt, for far too long.

A third hopeful was Shafiq, the *ancien régime*’s last prime minister. Prior to that, he had an excellent reputation. But let us not forget that he said that Mubarak was his role model. He made several errors of judgment. He allowed Suzanne Mubarak and her two boys to travel overseas several times to move the funds they swindled to ‘safe havens’, and did not ask foreign states to freeze their assets. Those who perverted our politics were not arrested. And, adding insult to injury, he prevaricated over the inquest into the assassination of over 800 promising youths and the maiming of thousands more – 1,500 of whom lost their eyesight totally or partially. So, it is safe to say that he is a prominent member of the *felool* and the generals’ man for president.

He ordered the low-flying of fighter aircraft and helicopters over Tahrir Square, in a threatening gesture, and for much too long, refused to call it a revolution. His suggestion to give the youth a little ‘Hyde Park corner’, where they could go to have discussions, and that he had even sent them sweets – gave a strong and long-lasting impression that he belittled them and their admirable sacrifices. He thus created a huge reservoir of resentment.

2.6.2012

Mubarak and his interior minister were sentenced to life imprisonment, though their verdict is subject to appeal. The judge dismissed corruption charges against Mubarak and his sons.



7.6.2012

Two separate teams reviewed the voting lists, altered in a shocking way, to make electoral fraud easier. One, led by Judge Walid Sharabi, noticed that between the March referendum and the presidential elections close to six million voters' names were added. Although 40% of Egypt's population was younger than the voting age of eighteen, less than a million reached that age, last year. The other, headed by former NDP MP, Dr Ibrahim Kamel, said that the statisticians and engineers who worked with him discovered about 14 million forgeries.

16.6.2012

The Supreme Constitutional Court ruled to dissolve Parliament on a technicality. Two-thirds of members were elected through party lists, and one-third ran independently. The court found that a majority of the latter were party members who had not made the lists. What a relief to be rid of them.

18.6.2012

The results of the first round of presidential elections was a shock. The evening before, I was among a group of Egyptians in Toronto, discussing outcomes. I said in jest that the nightmare scenario would be a re-run between Shafiq and Morsi, which was bound to polarise the Egyptians. I laughed it off, but I will live to regret it, I know. Had the liberal candidates chosen one among them, instead of running separately, we would not have been in this quandary. He would have swept to victory from the first round. It was ridiculous to have 13 candidates.

22.6.2012

I saw a NASA image of Egypt at night. It is beautiful – in the shape of our lotus flower. However, it reveals the stark fact that we seem squeezed into a small straightjacket. Egyptians live on 7% of their country's area. Sinai covers 5.5%. We must expand into the western and eastern deserts, and most importantly, into Sinai. By investing heavily there, we will create more arable land to feed ourselves, erect more towns and villages to house the growing number of the younger population, and assimilate the unemployed.

24.6.2012

Dr Mohamed Morsi, the FJP's leader, became the first civilian president, with 51.7% against Shafiq's 48.3%. Turn-out was 51.6%. First congrats came from the Hamas leadership.

This is no time to point the finger at who was responsible for the president we ended up with, and especially not to heave insults on Facebook on those who voted for Morsi. But it is vital that we try to understand what has happened, now that the dust has settled.

I noticed from some emails that blame was squarely placed on the Egyptian electorate at home – the majority of whom are dispossessed and illiterate. If we were in their shoes, if we could not buy our families the next meal, if we ate meat once a year when people handed it out on *Eid El-Adha*, we would happily vote for whoever gave us a bag of groceries, or a package of meat, or some cash that would put food on our table for our children. We would vote for the Islamists, convinced that when they govern, they would relieve us from poverty, since they already understood the predicament we, poor souls, were in.

I strongly blame Egyptians who live in democratic states, whose votes would have counterbalanced, and even exceeded those in the Gulf area, and added to those in favour of a secular civilian non-military government. From looking at the voting numbers and patterns of the eight million abroad, only approximately half a million were registered, and merely half of these voted, the majority of



whom in Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states. What a disgrace not to vote for the sake of families and friends left behind. The qualifications they earned from free education in their mother country enabled them to be accepted in the states they emigrated to. If not for anyone or anything else, they should have voted for Egypt.

Prior to the elections, liberals were preaching to the converted by email. They did not launch programmes of voluntary social welfare work in the Delta or in Upper Egypt. They did not visit the dirt-poor, underdeveloped areas around the bigger cities, said to house 25 million people, to talk to them and explain that voting for the Brotherhood or the Salafis had nothing to do with hell or heaven. They did not improve their sordid living conditions, by having networks of clean water, sewage and electricity installed, and thus gain the trust of the simple people. In short, they did not try to win their hearts and minds. Whether for altruistic reasons or not, the Islamists were doing all this for decades.

They have not bonded with the revolution's youth groups, nor befriended them and guided them. They looked down upon them with condescension, and treated them as spoilt kids or *baltageyah*.

Now we must accept what the ballot boxes produced. Having said that, we should all prepare for the next elections – whether parliamentary or presidential – and work towards reaching our goals.

3.8.2012

Morsi swore in his new cabinet, headed by Hisham Qandil, a former irrigation minister. It includes several Mubarak hold-overs and ministers from the outgoing government.

Shadi Hamid, an Egypt expert at the Brookings Doha Center, put it in a nutshell, saying, “If I had to think of the most uninspiring group of people to appoint, I would have come up with the current list”. What else would one expect of a man described by the *New York Times* as of “modest stature and small charisma” – the “spare tyre”, as he came to be known here, after the Brotherhood's strongman, Khayrat El-Shater was disqualified, and Morsi thrust into the elections instead?

13.8.2012

Morsi named Tantawi – defence minister since twenty years – and `Anan, as his advisors, easing them out of the SCAF. They will not be held answerable for the death of the hundreds of revolutionaries, nor the 1,200 arrested arbitrarily and sentenced by military courts. Tantawi's replacement is General Abdel-Fatah El-Sissi, formerly head of military intelligence.

6.10.2012

It is the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1973 October war. People were shocked by the ‘celebration’, held at a stadium. Morsi toured the arena in a convertible car, waving to the audience. He thinks he is our Caesar! Tareq El-Zomor sat among the VIPs. He was pardoned and freed from prison, convicted for playing a role in the 1981 assassination of President Anwar El-Sadat – the man who dared to fight the 1973 war.

22.11.2012

Morsi gave himself quasi-dictatorial powers. His decree ceded him unlimited political authority and immunity from judicial oversight, from the day he assumed the presidency.



24.11.2012

The stock market fell nearly 10%, the worst plunge since February 2011, at news that Morsi concentrated all powers in his hands.

30.11.2012

The Constituent Assembly, fearing a court ruling that could disband it, approved a draft constitution in a hasty marathon all-night meeting, aired live, without the participation of liberal and Christian members. Their end-product gives clerics a say over legislation and restricts freedoms and women's rights. It is tailor-made for the *Ikhwan*, the Salafis and the armed forces.

7.12.2012

For the third time this week, Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed dismay and rebuked Morsi over the fundamental flaws, ambiguities and omissions in the draft constitution. She was alarmed by the surge of violence and the rise in casualties, provoked by people's opposition to the document.

17.12.2012

It is the fifth in a century! Turnout for the referendum on the controversial constitution was low (32%). The *Ikhwan* stated on Saturday evening that the preliminary results showed there were over 43% 'No' votes, despite widespread fraud by their supporters, irregularities, breaches, violations, absence of judges, documented by thousands of official complaints and reports, some recorded at police stations. The public sent YouTube footage, aired on TV stations, during the voting. These have shown the real mood of Egyptians, and their political preferences.

An analysis of results after all the referenda and elections reveals fault lines between those who voted for the Islamists and others: cities in contrast to the rural areas, except for the majority Christian towns in southern Egypt; the educated versus the 40% illiterate; and the better-off against those living under the poverty line.

## 2013

15.1.2013

The MEMRI recording of Morsi's slur against Jews is in contrast to his current policies, though I have grave reservations about this source. Its sole *raison d'être* is to comb audio-visual material, and pick statements by Arabs and Muslims – often out of context – to tar them. Also, the *Ikhwan*'s loose cannon, Vice-Chairman Essam El-Erian, invited 'Egypt's Jews' to return. What a switch from their former policy towards Israelis and Jews!

21.1.2013

A *New York Times* article said the *Ikhwan* were struggling to exert their political power. That is a glimmer of hope: they as yet cannot control the military, nor the police and the security agencies, nor the media and the foreign ministry.

6.2.2013

Hazem Abou Ismail, the controversial Salafi leader, wed a young Syrian girl for three days. He was one of the presidential candidates, who had been disqualified because his mother had American nationality – a fact that he kept denying, at length. Islamists are obsessed with one thing only, sex, a former Egyptian ambassador to Saudi Arabia once told me. This reminded me of the nose job that a Salafi MP had, and his affair with an unknown very sensuous belly dancer. According to



strict Muslim scripture, it is a sin to change God's creation. When Mohamed El-Belkemi was photographed on his hospital bed with the bandaged nose, he alleged that he was attacked on the highway and robbed of LE100,000! Investigations proved he lied.

A Muslim cleric and MP, Ali Wanis, was caught in his car with a woman wearing a *niqab*, in an act of "indecent exposure", on the highway, near Toukh, a Delta Town. First, he said she was his sister (incest!), then his niece (incest!). In the end, the woman disclosed that she sought him for a favour.

During its deliberations, parliament neglected Egypt's socio-economic, political and national security problems. Instead, girls' marriage age was discussed at length. MPs first suggested nine years, then settled on whenever girls reached puberty. At the time, a *fatwa* (religious decree), by an extremist Salafi cleric, allowed men to have child brides, and, "have sex without insertion, which would be delayed until she reached puberty". How disgusting! Under our law, minimum age is 16 for girls and 18 for men.

I used to look at my 14-year-old grand-daughter and think, My God, such a child could be married with two children. Could she cope with the physical demands of a husband? Could she run a household? Would she know how to raise children? How would her psychological state be changed? What would become of her early dreams, her hopes, her outlook on life?

Right after these fanatics came to power, they dispatched 'medical' teams to the dispossessed villages in the south and in the Delta area, to perform genital mutilation on girls, despite its illegality. It is an African, not a Muslim practice, and is prevalent in backward communities, wherever they exist.

7.2.2013

There is an explosion of innovative talent – newly-composed patriotic songs, poems, placards. The revolution also unleashed an artistic genie, graffiti, by artists who were themselves revolutionaries. Their drawings express their views about politics, events, incidents, heroes, martyrs, and especially politicians in power, which is why the walls were whitewashed, time and again. That did not deter them. New graffiti still mushrooms across Egypt, some humorous, making a laughing stock of the government, accompanied by poems, about how scared it is of their brushes, and how cowardly by "fighting" the walls. Galleries now exhibit their work. They are also in demand abroad. Anani, known as "Ganzeer", produced real masterpieces, and exhibited in Frankfurt. Dokhan displayed in Washington. Researchers studied this phenomenon and found that Alexandria's streets had the most of these amazing open-air galleries.

None of the artists were Islamists. Their minds are neither critical nor creative, and they are not civil-libertarian. Since childhood, their 'education' within their cells is based on *Al-Sama` wal-Ta`a* (listen and obey), and rote learning.

20.2.2013

Cynthia Nelson, head of the Anthropology Department at the American University in Cairo (AUC) authored a book entitled *Doria Shafik, Egyptian Feminist: A Woman Apart*, highlighting the outstanding role she played for women's emancipation. An *Ikhwan* official at the ministry of education ordered her life history and photo deleted from school books, because she was not veiled, he said. But it goes deeper: remove from the nation's memory the role model she could become for women's rights advocates. Her sister was my neighbour for 30 years, and her two daughters worked at AUC, when I taught there myself.





24.2.2013

Morsi is trying his very best to belittle the opposition. In his self-denial, he is going down Mubarak's very same path. The moot question is whether he too will be disposed of, and how soon and at what cost.

2.3.2013

Waves of locusts reached the Muqattam area, the Brotherhood's HQs and Morsi's political base, and the 5<sup>th</sup> District, his home – both at the edge of Cairo. The man attracts catastrophes, wherever he goes.

11.3.2013

Last year, I had strong reservations about Qatar, when it became known that it interfered in several countries in our area. This state is punching above its waist. When its ruler visited Gaza, I thought something ominous would surely follow. News leaks say that he paid Hamas hundreds of millions of dollars to send their members to protect Morsi.

It transpired that Qataris had shares in the *Guardian*, and that *al-Jazeera Masr* was partly funded by the Brotherhood.

12.3.2013

Gulf money is said to be undermining Morsi's government, and paying for rioters to create chaos, thus holding back the country. It seems that a military-backed Shafiq is the man the Gulf states – except Qatar – would support as president. This reminds me of Iraq, prior to the US occupation, when the West was hoping for another strongman to replace Saddam Hussein. They all share a book of scenarios set in stone.

16.3.2013

The Western media proclaims that the post-Mubarak elections were free and fair, and the first honest ones in our history. Scores of Egyptian civil society associations, as well as the Carter foundation, who covered the elections and referenda, dispute this. Prior to the 1952 officers' coup, Egypt's relatively long parliamentary history has seen honest elections.

29.4.2013

The West is encouraging the emergence of a 'Sunni arc' to constrict the 'Shia arc', which Jordan's king warned of, regardless of its dire consequences, and the obvious failures of the *Ikhwan* in Egypt. The US has not learnt any lessons from Iraq, where they supported the Shia first, then switched to David Petraeus's "Sunni Awakening" in 2007.

1.6.2013

Adly Mansour was appointed head of the Constitutional Court. He was selected by Morsi, out of three names proposed by the judges.

22.6.2013

El-Sissi was faithful to Morsi, the Supreme Commander, until the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. He realised that people had reached the boiling point, because Morsi had turned a deaf ear to all their demands. In the week leading to 30/6, set by the *Tamarod* youngsters for country-wide demonstrations, he met him several times. To pre-empt an explosion of people's anger, he advised Morsi to accept:

- a) early presidential elections or a referendum to gauge Morsi's popularity;
- b) discard the controversial constitution and write a new one by a committee representative of all Egyptians;



c) demand the cabinet's resignation and form an inclusive government.

The president rejected all proposals. He seemed doomed to follow Mubarak's path.

23.6.2013

El-Sissi gave a moving speech. Finally, someone showed understanding for our misery, for that feeling of being hostages of the *Ikhwan*, maltreated and terrified by them.

24.6.2013

Morsi received El-Sissi and said that he accepted the people's demands, and promised to tell them in his speech tomorrow. He then headed a National Security Council meeting.

25.6.2013

This was not a speech. It was a long, tiresome name-calling tirade against well-known personalities, known for their integrity. Morsi reneged on his promise to the general.

Television showed tanks rolling into the media city, and troops taking up positions in front of Maspero. I shuddered.

1.7.2013

El-Sissi asked the Speaker of the *Shura* chamber, Ahmad Fahmy, to reason with Morsi, his brother-in-law, to avert chaos in the country. He was met with stubborn refusal.

My daughter arrived from Toronto. Yesterday morning, she demonstrated there, then boarded an evening flight, arriving in Alexandria by mid-day. In the evening, she and her family joined me in Alexandria's iconic square, Sidi Gaber.

Enraged by Morsi's refusal to step down, protesters set fire to the HQs of the *Ikhwan*. History's repeating itself. In January 2011, the NDP's HQs were also burned.

3.7.2013

El-Sissi addressed the nation, after a lengthy meeting with representatives of political, national, religious, and youth forces (the *Ikhwan* rejected El-Sissi's invitation). Morsi's gone.

General Abdel-Fattah El-Sissi's televised historic address to the nation on 3 July 2013:

"The speech which the president made last night before the expiry of the 48-hour deadline failed to meet the overall demands of the people, prompting the armed forces – in compliance with their historic and national duties – to consult with figures representing political, national, religious, and youth forces without excluding any party.

The parties present agreed on a future roadmap containing initial measures which ensures the construction of a strong and coherent Egyptian society which does not exclude any of its members and trends, and which ends the state of conflict and division.

The roadmap includes the following:

The Constitution shall be temporarily suspended

The head of the Supreme Constitutional Court shall take oath before the court's general assembly

Early presidential elections shall take place



The head of the Supreme Constitutional Court shall run the affairs of the country during the transitional period until a new president has been elected

The head of the Supreme Constitutional Court shall have the authority to pass constitutional declarations during the transitional phase

A national technocrat government – which shall be both strong and competent – shall be formed and shall enjoy all the powers needed to run the current phase

A committee shall be formed comprising figures from various expertise and spectrums to review the proposed amendments to the Constitution, which has been temporality suspended

The Supreme Constitutional Court is hereby urged to pass the draft law on parliamentary election and to embark on preparing for parliamentary election

A media charter of honour shall be designed in a way that ensures media freedom; observes professional rules, credibility, and neutrality; and advances the homeland's top interests

Practical measures shall be taken to empower young people and bring them into the state's institutions so they can be partners in the decision-making process on the various levels of the executive authority

A higher committee for national reconciliation shall be formed. The committee shall comprise figures who enjoy credibility and acceptance from all national forces, and who represent all affiliations”.

Fireworks exploded over the city. We cheered, cried, and hugged each other on the street.

The euphoria should not stop us from being vigilant and making sure that this time we get our demands.

4.7.2013

It has been one year since I left London and stayed on in Alexandria. And although it has been the worst, darkest year of my life, I thank God for it. The far-right-wing terrorists' religious mask has been shattered. Those whose votes were bought with a bag of groceries and promises of going to heaven – the poorest of the poor, the lowliest illiterates – have learnt that the *Ikhwan* are not as pure and honest as they thought. They have heard them telling lies and no longer trust them. I hope their influence – and presence – in the countries they are established in (some say 80-100), either as the governing power, or members of the governing coalition, or a political opposition force, or under the guise of welfare societies (mostly in the US and Europe) will diminish and their murky Machiavellian plots curbed. Morsi's demise will shape political Islam for decades to come.

5.7.2013

Their survival has always been vital to the Brotherhood, even if it meant sacrificing one of their own. This guaranteed their continuance in the countries they are in. Since our second revolution, their international organisation held a dozen of emergency meetings in Doha, Istanbul, and Lahore, to discuss the situation, and find ways to fund their militants in Egypt.

Secret negotiations by military and civilian parties are underway here to find a compromise, or guarantee Morsi's safe exit.

Morsi and his gang will not go quietly. *Al-Jazeera* aired Morsi's declaration that he still considers himself the president and has no intention of stepping down. The parties who claim the mantle of Islam know this is their battle for survival, and may become defiant. Those old enough to remember, and the younger generation who read history, or heard about it from their elders,



know the *Ikhwan*'s bloody path in the late 1930s and 1940s. They assassinated, in broad daylight, El-Nuqrashi Pasha, who refused to release indicted *Ikhwan* members from jail, as well as the magistrate, Ahmad El-Khazindar Bey, who had charged them. Other deadly attacks included another prime minister, Ahmad Maher Pasha, the Minister of *Awqaf* (Endowment) Sheikh Hussein El-Zahabi, the intellectual, Farag Fouda, in addition to the attempts on the lives of the Nobel Peace laureate, Naguib Mahfouz, the Interior Minister Hassan El-Alfi, in 1993, and Nasser in 1954.

They burnt police stations, cinemas, banks, government buildings, restaurants and shops. More recently, let us remember the attacks on tourists by *Al Gama`ah Al-Islamiyah* - Deir El-Bahari in Luxor being the most sinister - as well as on the Military Technology Academy, and policemen and civilians across Egypt.

They have already started terrifying peaceful people who oppose them, using *Grad* and *Stinger* missiles, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), Kalashnikovs, hand grenades, machine-guns, and other varieties of guns.

8.7.2013

On 5 July, on the periphery of Sidi Gaber, a video showed Islamists pushing two teenagers to their deaths, from the roof of the building, then beating them. The mother of one of the victims died from heart failure during her son's funeral. He was her only child, born after ten years of marriage and much treatment. The leader of the criminals held the black flag of al-Qaeda. He was arrested yesterday.

9.7.2013

The interim president, Adly Mansour, chose Hazem el-Beblawy, an elderly liberal economist, as prime minister, and set a six-months election timetable. His selection signaled the urgency of economic reforms. Mohamed ElBaradei had been named first, but the ultraconservative Salafi *Al-Nour* party rejected his nomination.

The political scene is like a *bras-de-fer* contest between the *Tamarod* (Rebel) youngsters and the authorities, concerning ministerial appointments, and whether to adopt conciliation with, or exclusion of, the *Ikhwan* and the *felool* in our political future. To solve the current crisis, one could envisage integrating those who do not have blood on their hands within our new parliamentary system.

Optimism is on the rise, especially as some of the names joining the cabinet are being known. I am hopeful this new administration restores public confidence.

23.7.2013

I have been warning of Mahmoud Ezzat's danger, the first deputy of the *murshid*, known as 'the iron man', 'the hawk', or 'the fox'. He just fled to Gaza, accompanied by a handful of associates, and lives in the Golden Beach Hotel, from where he organises terrorist attacks in Sinai, and across Egypt. For those who would like to learn more about the *Ikhwan*, I recommend reading the bestseller *Serr El-Ma`bad (The Secret of the Temple)* by Tharwat El-Kharbawi, a lawyer and former senior Brotherhood member.

25.7.2013

Former ambassador Dr Daniel Kurtzer's testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing on Egypt today was balanced. However, some clarifications are in order, as there are



invisible ways the Egyptian military assists US vital interests in the region, thus giving it some leverage.

- a) The US has access to naval and air facilities in times of emergencies. US Air Force aircrafts' sorties from Egyptian airbases have been in excess of 36,000 in various operations.
- b) US Navy vessels have priority transit through the Suez Canal. They do not queue, as other ships do, on their way to the Gulf or Pacific theatres of operations, or back.
- c) Military aid to Egypt is profitable to the American military-industrial complex. It is encouraged by congress members, whose states have armament-related factories. Much of it is disbursed to American advisors stationed in Egypt, as per conditions attached to the military sales agreements. None of the aid enters the Egyptian Treasury in cash – it ends up in the American's.
- d) America's recent wars were in warm countries, in a dusty desert context, such as Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq. The *Bright Star* manoeuvres enable its forces to exercise – and test their platforms' performance – in similar conditions.
- e) US aid constitutes 2% of our GNP. Most of it military, and does little to address our socio-economic problems.

Would the US put at risk such privileges?

Public opinion in Egypt is bristling by abrasive calls, over many decades, by American congress members and politicians warning of, or calling for, cutting US aid, with no consideration for our national pride, nor for America's strategic interests. The Egyptian public is pushing to thank the US for its past aid, and ask Washington to halt it, in which case, the Camp David agreement is up for review. We would be free to deploy heavy artillery, tanks and aircraft to Sinai's C area, to deal with terrorists there, without seeking Israel's authorisation, something everyone resented. Israel will have to increase its military budget to cover the deployment of its forces on the Egyptian border.

After the Obama Administration postponed the transfer of four fighter aircraft to Egypt, President Vladimir Putin offered to provide Cairo with the latest in Russia's armoury. Visits followed by a SCAF member, General El-`Assar to Moscow, and the head of Russian intelligence to Cairo. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and Defence Minister General Sergey Shoigu, held meetings in Cairo with their counterparts on 13-14 November. A \$4 billion arms deal, with soft payments, was said to have been discussed.

The Soviet Union lost its influence – and foothold – in Egypt in 1972. Is it America's turn in 2013?

26.7.2013

This was again a gathering of happy people, claiming their rights and yearning for a safe life. Everybody was smiling. The atmosphere was amazingly festive, and I joined full steam in the flag-waving. We chanted slogans, sang patriotic songs and swayed to their tunes, and cheered the helicopters that overflowed us.

There were all ages, even an old man on a wheelchair, dozens of parents with kids of all ages, walking along or on their fathers' shoulders, or in pushchairs. A young mother carried a tiny baby in a halter. They came from all walks of life, all professions, all social and economic strata. No woman was molested. There was no vandalism, no violence. I was proud to see Egyptians at their very best.



As during the first revolution, there were many funny placards; one foreign correspondent commented that the Egyptians were laughing Morsi away. But there was one difference: Nasser's posters were brandished along El-Sissi's. Signs in the streets, in the press, and across academia tell we are entering a neo-Nasserist era.

At dusk, I had goose pimples and my eyes were moist when church bells, across the country, chimed with the Muezzins' call for Maghrib prayers (end of the day's fast), for the first time in Egypt's history. A few days before, Pope Tawadros had asked his flock to fast with Muslims on that day. It was a picture of the Egypt I knew as I grew up.

31.7.2013

The government instructed the security forces to break up two large sit-ins in Cairo. For six long weeks, the people living in these neighbourhoods suffered abuse by supporters of the deposed president. They were prevented from parking their cars near their homes, searched on their way in and out, and sometimes beaten. Any deliveries – medicines, groceries or food – were tampered with. Excrement cluttered the gardens around the buildings, and hoses were used to bathe in the open, disregarding any basic ethics or hygiene. Tents were in the hundreds, loudspeakers turned on full volume day and night. During the holy month of *Ramadan*, when Muslims abstain from food and drink and all carnal activity from dawn to sunset, two “religious edicts” offended the peoples' sensibilities and turned them against the *Ikhwan*. While widely reported in the Arabic-language media, here and abroad, these *fatwas* were totally ignored by the English-language broadsheets. One allowed them to skip fasting, since they were on a *jihad*!<sup>2</sup> And *fatwat jihad al-nikah* allowed men to wed single females for a short period, without registering. Couples were given the use of a private tent for about half-an-hour, or they dismissed the buildings' janitors from their rooms to consume their marriage.<sup>3</sup> In a few cases, married women were abducted and forced to have sex.<sup>4</sup> Hassan El-Banna, the founder and first *murshid* of the *Ikhwan* once said, “*Laissu Ekhwanan, wa laissu muslimen*” (they are neither brothers nor Muslims). No comment.

As all were fed and paid, single mothers and their kids and unemployed poor devils joined, many from the countryside. Cairo's streets were free of beggars and street vendors. A veiled teenager appeared on TV, saying innocently, she was so happy there, she hoped Morsi is not released. The Heliopolis and Guizah areas, where many of my relatives and friends live, have been devastated. The Orman Garden's historic trees were chopped for fuel, and the giant bamboo trees used for tent posts.

8.8.2013

I drove 250 kilometers westward along the coast to join my two daughters and four grandchildren to celebrate *Eid Al-Adha*. We were to spend six days together. Departure day, over breakfast, we heard the news, and decided to stay, since cities were in chaos. The holiday mood vanished.

14.8.2013

Several rounds of negotiations failed to dislodge the Rab`a El-`Adaweyah and El-Nahda sit-ins. When the security forces approached, they were met with shots by snipers on the minaret, on roof-tops of high-rise buildings, and by those barricaded behind walls they built with stones torn out of the pavements. The troops were the first to suffer great losses, and so did they. The policemen, aided by the army, found small arms, heavy weapons and ammunition in the sit-ins. They also discovered shallow graves of corpses, bearing clear signs of torture, and decomposed bodies in the mosque's surgery. This was recorded by Human Rights officers and members of the press.





The Malawi National Museum, in the southern province of Minya, was ransacked by a horde of bearded men. Over 1,000 items were stolen, some, more than 3,500 years old. What they could not take, they burned, such as mummies.

28.8.2013

Within 30 months, we had two revolutions that toppled two existing orders, seemingly distinct, a secular dictatorship and a fascist Islamist one. I underscore the word “seemingly”. Many share the opinion that Morsi’s government surpassed Mubarak’s and brutalised us to a greater extent.

My daughter was astonished that the West had not come round and admitted reality: that a colossal number of people took to the streets on 30/6, not only in the major cities as in January 2011, but in villages and hamlets in the length and width of Egypt – more than one-third of the population – with one specific demand: Morsi’s ouster. “Is Egypt defying conventional political science? Have textbooks studied such a phenomenon as ours?”, she asked. I was trying to explain, when I remembered a recent article that perfectly reflected my opinion – what the Egyptian novelist and professor of political science at AUC, Dr Ezzedine Fishere, aptly called neo-Orientalism – that the “West’s bias towards the Brothers reflects a return of orientalism”. (*Financial Times*, 20 August, 2013).

Egyptians are particularly shocked by the flawed attitude of Western academia. Analysts repeated *ad nauseam* that Israel was the only democracy in a sea of dictatorships, which was true, as far as Jewish Israelis were concerned, not their Christian or Muslim citizens. They also relished in saying that there was no Arab street, implying that the area’s dictators ignored public opinion. Now that the people’s voice roared, they are in a state of denial – as the *Ikhwan*.

I doubt that their embassies in Cairo are blind to the grave legal and human rights violations committed by the *Ikhwan*-run government. They have witnessed the fanatical cohorts murdering peaceful demonstrators and troops from roof-tops, and even firing at homes from fly-overs. They have seen their arsonists burning and vandalising public buildings. They have heard about the discovery of hundreds of massive arms caches in their dens. They have recorded Morsi’s mismanagement, on the political, economic and social levels.

It was odd that the West turned a blind eye to the burning of 85 Christian-owned buildings, in the past five weeks alone – churches, schools, shops, homes, and charitable establishments. Islamist militants held the Copts responsible for colluding in Morsi’s ouster. Belatedly, the US Congress called for the protection of Egypt’s “minorities”. This is a misnomer. The Copts are part of Egypt’s fabric, as much as others.

## **Morsi: From the Prison Cell... and Back**

Since our second revolution, which resulted in the toppling of President Mohamed Morsi, the printed and audio-visual Western media claimed this was a coup. They have been disingenuous (in political correctness parlance), trumpeting their governments’ policies, and sounding like their spokespersons. Following are documented facts, either by court investigations and verdicts, or recorded on videos, which explain why we went to the streets from the 30<sup>th</sup> of June to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, and again on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July.



On the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2011, Mohamed Morsi, an unknown quantity and a man lacking distinctive qualities, was freed from Wadi El-Natrun prison, by members of the Palestinian Hamas *al-Qassam Brigade*, as well as Lebanese Hizbullah fighters. They opened several prisons and freed over 30,000 convicts, which led to a phenomenal rise in crimes across Egypt, unseen in its history.

Many heard Morsi phoning *al-Jazeera* live, saying that he and 34 other *Ikhwan* members were freed, along with other inmates, by “kind Bedouins, who happened to be in the area”. A senior Hamas member, among those freed, also phoned TV stations, four hours later, saying he had arrived in Gaza.

During Morsi’s tenure, the Ismailia court conducted intensive months-long investigations. Presiding judge Khaled El-Mahgub listened to thousands of witnesses, and established that masked non-Egyptians came through the Gaza-Egypt tunnels, in a fleet of mini-buses. Their bulldozers demolished the prison walls, and freed a number of inmates. They also set fire to the office that held the prison records. Prior to this assault, they attacked all security-related buildings in north Sinai. All of which clearly proves that this was a well-planned premeditated assault, not some random act by “kind Bedouins”.

Morsi’s case was to be sent to the Higher Criminal Court in Cairo to pass a verdict of high treason, for calling upon foreign parties to free him, and, in the process, killing 200 inmates and prison guards, including a police general. However, the Morsi-appointed prosecutor, Talaat Ibrahim, blocked it. His appointment was found illegal by the court and cancelled a short time before Morsi’s removal. Another prosecutor has been appointed. Morsi’s trial starts on 4 November, 15 months after Mubarak’s. (Note: The stock market rose by 10% on news of Morsi’s trial, the highest since 2011!)

After he became president, Morsi pardoned a great number of prisoners, including drug traffickers, murderers and Jihadis, who were serving life sentences, some of whom moved to Sinai. He sanctioned the entrance to Sinai of extremist militants, said to exceed 10,000, some of whose organisations’ names we had not heard of, and others who were known to exist as sleeping cells, in the southern provinces. Following are the names I was able to compile: *Al-Salafeyah Al-Gehadiyah*, *al-Qaeda*, *Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis*, formed by members of *Al-Tawheed wal-Gehad*, *Al-Gehad Al-Islami*, *Al-Gama`ah Al-Islamiyah*, *Gama`at Al-Tableegh wal-Da`wah*, *Kata’ib Al-Furqan*, *Gama`at Al-Takfeer wal-Hegrah*, *Al-Shawqieen*, *Hamas* and *Ansar Al-Gehad fi Sina’*. The sole mission of *Markaz Al-Tayar Al-Sunni li-Inqaz Misr* is to form militias to fight the armed forces.

These warlords started terrorist operations within Sinai and throughout the country, using methods and weapons that had rarely been used in Egypt – except in the Red Sea towns of Taba, Sharm El-Sheikh and Dahab, from 2006 to 2008 – such as timed explosives-laden cars (e.g., against the interior minister, in Cairo, most recently), and suicide attacks.

All seek *Ustaziat Al-`Alam*, namely, to establish an *ummah*, a worldwide caliphate, with Jerusalem as its capital, starting with Sinai. Their loyalty is not to Egypt. It is restricted within the narrow confines of membership to their organisations. The “other” is dehumanised, reflecting the Aryan and Zionist fascist views. People saw this as a sign that the *Ikhwan* planned to wipe out their seven-thousand-year Egyptian identity.

Morsi’s divisive actions – inciting Sunnah against Shia, Muslims against Christians, *Ikhwan* against the rest – turned most people against him. There were also many indications that the *murshid* and



his deputies were governing Egypt, and that Morsi was but their representative in the presidential palace.

Encouraged by the US acclaim for the ceasefire he brokered between Hamas and Israel, Morsi issued the 22 November dictatorial constitutional declaration, which shielded him from judicial scrutiny – something Mubarak and his predecessors never dared doing. On 5 December 2012, hundreds of thousands protested his diktat around the *Ittihadīya* Presidential Palace. He was seen on TV, fleeing in a car from a back-door, people throwing shoes and stones at him and shouting “*erha!*” (depart), for the first time since his election.

Nine deaths were reported. Most were targeted. The most prominent was that of the young journalist and political activist al-Husseini Abu Deif. He was shot in the head by a sniper, using an internationally-prohibited dum-dum bullet, designed to fragment inside the body and thus inflict maximum damage. The killing was ordered by Mohamed El-Beltagi, a senior Brotherhood member. Abu-Deif had published articles, incriminating Morsi’s relatives and associates of corruption, and was known to photograph the *Ikhwan*’s brutal practices against opponents. A man was seen running from the scene, clutching Abu-Deif’s camera. His murder became a focal point of Morsi’s trial.

El-Erian had ordered armed *Ikhwan* cadres on the scene. The demonstrators were brutally attacked, and 49 were snatched and tortured within the Palace walls, including a retired Egyptian diplomat, Yehya Negm. Before the prosecutors arrived, the vigilantes planted weapons on them.

Mustafa Khater, presiding judge of the North Cairo court, saw clear signs of torture on them, ruled that they are innocent and ordered their release. But in a televised speech, the president had already announced that they were traitors, conspiring against Egypt, and confessed being agents paid by foreign embassies. This prompted Ibrahim Talaat, Morsi’s “private prosecutor”, to prevail on Khater to review his sentence, and order the imprisonment of a few – those with no family connections, or poor illiterate people. Khater refused. Talaat banished him to a remote area. The Judges’ syndicate challenged the decision, and Khater remained in his court.

Morsi excluded members of the opposition, and appointed 12,000 completely inexperienced *Ikhwan* members to executive posts across the country. In the *Ikhwan*’s earlier literature, this was *Tamkeen* – assume control of professional associations, labour and student unions, local councils and authorities, and NGOs.

Egyptians resented the Mubaraks’ lavish lifestyle. Morsi outspent them, and increased the presidential budget by LE80 million; and transferred state resources to *Ikhwan*-affiliated NGOs.

The cathedral of St Mark was attacked for several hours. It was live on television. Thugs climbed on its walls and on high buildings around it. A barrage of Molotov bottles and gun fire followed. Parishioners and priests were trapped within the enclosure. Their screams were heart wrenching. After several hours of mayhem, it all stopped quite suddenly. The *baltagueyah* all disappeared. A police general had arrived on the scene. This was the first time that the cathedral had been assaulted.

Al-Azhar, the moderate world-renowned beacon of Muslim learning, has also been a scene of rampaging thugs. In its long history, it had been attacked only twice: by Bonaparte’s legions and by Morsi’s hordes. Its sheikh, Dr Ahmad El-Tayeb, one of the most learned and wisest we ever had, was subjected to a continuous campaign of slander.



Morsi allowed the blockading of the Higher Constitutional Court, listed as the 4<sup>th</sup> world-wide, to prevent their rulings. He was also about to purge 3,500 judges, perceived as hostile to his government. Our judges received support from the world federation of constitutional judges.

He also turned a blind eye to the encirclement of the media city, on the outskirts of Cairo. Police forces were not sent to disperse the thugs, who erected brick-built restrooms, and brought herds of cattle, which they slaughtered daily and roasted. Anchormen's lives were threatened, and their talk-show hosts were constantly abused and attacked with stones and sticks. Many of their cars were damaged.

Last year, during the holy month of *Ramadan*, 16 troops were assassinated as they broke their fast at sundown, in Sinai. This year, 25 enlistees were also massacred there. The cases were not investigated, and Morsi opposed any counter-action by the armed forces.

Morsi himself, in a first in Egypt's contemporary history, in addition to his minions, dragged hundreds of the members of the press before the courts, accusing them of the crime of *lese-majesté*.

The newly-appointed minister of culture sacked the Opera director and the heads of various cultural departments. At the same time, members of the *Shura* council called for the banning of 'pornographic' ballet, which "awakens sensual sexual desires". Authors, painters, sculptors, actors, singers – anybody with a link to the world of arts – occupied the ministry of culture, until the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, this year. They set up a street stage and offered free artistic programmes every evening – much to the delight of the Zamalek crowd. The ministry is adjacent to the building where I have a *pied-à-terre*. I saw it all, when I was in Cairo for my aunt's funeral.

We had electricity cuts for hours, and double-queued at gas stations, also for hours, choking the traffic. Trucks, buses, cars and farming water pumps, lay idle. A black market of oil products emerged, and affected the price of all wheel-transported goods, particularly agricultural produce. Our foreign currency reserves were depleted, and the government could not import more fuel. Later, the army discovered dozens of giant tanks on Egypt's border with Gaza, each 10 metres deep, filled with smuggled benzine and kerosene.

Egyptian law bars foreigners from owning land in Sinai. During Morsi's rule, some 50,000 Palestinians were granted Egyptian citizenship, and acres were sold to them along the Gaza-Egypt border.

The Brotherhood-brokered constitution did not define Egypt's borders, as most other constitutions do, except Israel's. It has been alleged that this was in preparation for assisting the US to help broker a peace deal: the transfer of Palestinians from Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories to Sinai, and the founding of a rump state there.

Western governments have called for Morsi's release. Lady Ashton visited him, and looked into his fridge, to make sure he is well-provided for. African Union representatives and human rights officers followed. Four foreign ministers visited El-Shater in prison. What a circus! They did not do that for Mubarak, their 30-year vassal and ally. What makes Morsi so very special? What deal did they concoct with him and the *Ikhwan*?



Anne Patterson, who was referred to as the *hayzaboon* (crone) became the most hated foreign ambassador in living memory. Her interference on the side of the *Ikhwan* was resented by the majority of Egyptians. During a Rotary meeting, which she addressed at the Guezirah Club, she heard an earful, which prompted her to leave in a hurry. It is indeed ironic that the US administration has put her in charge of the Near East desk. Also, the new US ambassador is said to be Robert S. Ford, who served as a link to the Syrian opposition in the civil war. Both appointments do not augur well for future Egypt-US relations. And then, Americans ask “Why do they hate us?”.

The value of the pound plummeted. Foreign currency reserves plunged from \$36 billion in 2011 to \$14.4 billion today. Those living under the poverty line of less than \$2 a day rose from 40% to two-thirds of the population, while a small, super-rich group amassed enormous fortunes. Inflation soared. One-quarter of the 26-million workforce are unemployed and earn their living in the ‘grey economy’. The gap between rich and poor widened. Over 3,000 factories were shuttered, and none was launched by the *Ikhwan*. Security is still wanting. Mounds of trash are everywhere.

Lastly, and most importantly, Morsi swept to the presidency thanks to the candidates who lost in the first round and lent him their support in the re-run. At the infamous Fairmont Hotel meeting, he accepted their nine conditions, none of which he delivered – *inter alia*, to appoint a Copt and a woman as vice-presidents, for the first time in Egypt, as his spokesman told the *Guardian* (26 June, 2012).

The military, by its very nature, is not a democratic institution, and we have opposed the SCAF before. We support them now, because there is no better, or other, alternative. I need to point out that there is a natural attachment between Egyptians – rich and poor – and the armed forces, considered as part of the nation’s fabric. There is always a relative who is an officer or a conscript in most families. Now, the armed forces are headed by a man of a different calibre, one that risked his life for us. He is aware of the SCAF’s political mismanagement and its deadly mistakes, and the revolutionaries have matured during the past thirty months. Accordingly, the rules of the game have changed between these two protagonists.

Facts on the ground prove that this is not a military coup. The army’s intervention was fully legitimate, given that it responded to the demands of the Egyptians, 33 million of whom took to the streets, from Alexandria to Aswan, and from Marsa Matrouh to Rafah. Google was the first to confirm the numbers, and *BBC World* transmitted that ours were the largest demonstrations in the history of mankind. Anyone who has not lived under these circumstances may criticise our second revolution, and, if it suits them to call it a coup, then fine. But we are thankful to the army for having intervened on our side.

## Final Reflections

Our two revolutions led to the politicisation of society at all levels. People talk about politics in the *souk*, on public buses and trams, around the dinner table. The disappearance of fear is another change. Any authority that has not responded to the people’s needs, nor solved its perennial problems, loses its legitimacy. Our population is young. Its average age is 25. It will not submit to despots, nor to manipulators of religion. They experienced their strength in bringing about change. Despite the *Ikhwan*’s fierce death threats and violent – sometimes mortal – attacks, they have gone to the streets. In contrast, when the *murshid*, Mohamed Badie, visited the Rab`a sit-in, he came in



an ambulance wearing a *niqab*, which Safwat Hegazi also wore, when he was arrested close to the Libyan border.

Having been shoulder-to-shoulder with men, throughout the last two years, demonstrating and voting, women now long for empowerment. They have gained self-confidence, and become aware of the hard-won vital role they must play in building Egypt's future. I am all for giving them a quota in parliament – temporarily – to promote their political activism. El-Sadat gave them one seat in each constituency, but that was cancelled by Mubarak, under pressure from radical Islamists. Iraqi women get 25% in parliament and in all elected councils. Workers and peasants get 50% of parliament seats. Since positive discrimination is accepted, it should be enforced for 48% of the population.

Parents took their kids to demonstrations, and most families rarely watch movies at home. Political talk shows are the order of the day, and kids listen to what the studio guests say and what their parents discuss. Our next generations will be politically literate. This will make a huge difference.

The police are back on the streets, and have somewhat regained the people's confidence. Some have undergone vocational training at home and abroad, especially in dealing with demonstrations. Since 25 January 2011, they have lost 380 policemen and officers – 141 since the Rab'a breakthrough alone – and over 1,000 injured.

Since 1952, Nasserism, pan-Arabism, Liberalism and Islamism have been the mainstream trends on Egypt's political stage. There has been an explosion of new parties, similar to post-Franco Spain, in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's implosion, in some Eastern European states, and among the Iraqi opposition, based in London, prior to Saddam Hussein's toppling. These four tendencies are reflected in Egypt's new parties (86), and movements (*Harakah*) and coalitions (108). If they have in mind to win in the parliamentary elections, those with similar ideologies must merge.

A synopsis of the description and definition of a revolution – combining Oxford's and Webster's Dictionaries – is an abrupt forcible political overthrow of a government, or social order, or established authority, or seizure of power from within a given system, in favour of a new system, towards effecting dramatic, basic, and wide-ranging political and socio-economic changes in the structure of the population and in the authority of the state.

It is interesting to note that both our revolutions differed from these descriptions in that they were not abrupt. They were pre-planned. The date for 25/1 was fixed in advance, and circulated by using social media. The *Tamarod* movement set the date 30/6, three months ahead. By then, Egyptians had signed 22,134,465 forms and included their ID numbers as confirmation, demanding Morsi's removal.

Also, neither Mubarak nor Morsi were overthrown forcibly. Egyptians, in their millions, went to the streets, asking for their legitimate rights, in the first instance. They repeated it again, thirty months later, to reclaim 25/1, which was grabbed by the Brotherhood. The armed forces supported the people's legitimate demands immediately, in the second instance, but belatedly and half-heartedly, in the first.

The objectives of both revolutions were to remove the established governments, and bring about radical changes to the people's socio-economic conditions and to the state's political structure.





Calls for democracy, accountability, freedoms of thought and speech, transparency, law and order – all of which had been restricted under both regimes – were the core demands of the masses. Thus, 25/1 and 30/6 are the two pillars of Egyptian democracy.

In 2011, and again in 2013, Egyptians viewed their civilian governments as more threatening than military rule. While the people were greatly relieved when the armed forces supported them, the military institution thus became engaged in an existential struggle with the existing regime. In the aftermath of the 25/1 revolution, authority was handed to the SCAF, then wrestled away by Morsi. In 2013, the presiding judge of the Constitutional Court was appointed as a transitional president, as stipulated by the constitution. A civilian government took the reins of power, adopted a road map, and suspended the constitution rammed through to ratification by Morsi. The army responded to the demands of the millions who aimed at repossessing democracy and restoring security, and was but a guarantor of the road map.

According to text books on politics, a mass movement representative of the fabric of a nation, urban and rural, of its various professions, socio-economic standards, age groups, sexes, religions and sects, ethnic groups, political affiliations – one that has socio-economic and political demands, shared by all – such as regime change leading to democracy and the rule of law, equality of opportunity, human dignity, freedom of thought and expression, as unequivocally stated in a new constitution, is confirmed as being a revolution. The 2011 and 2013 Egyptian revolutions conform to this description.

President Hosni Mubarak lost his legitimacy on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2011, with the “battle of the camels” and its violent aftermath.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces lost its legitimacy on 9 October 2011, with the Maspero massacre, followed in November 2011, with the vicious unprovoked killing of protesters, on Mohamed Mahmoud Street.

President Mohamed Morsi lost his legitimacy on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2012, when he gave himself unchecked powers, leading to the 5<sup>th</sup> of December events around the presidential palace.

Future presidents will now be aware of the destiny of rulers who lose the confidence of the people.

The “Egyptian street” awoke and took the initiative. The people who lost lives, limbs and livelihood now know their rights, earned at a high price, throughout the past two years. The future of how they govern themselves is on the line. They look forward to a fully-fledged democracy and fundamental political transformations.

We hope that we would regain the ascendancy that we rightly deserve, regionally and internationally. We want Egypt to reclaim its rightful place as the undisputed leader of the Arab states. We long for a government of law and order. We are hopeful we will usher in a new era of social justice. We need to have qualified people to deal with income inequality by closing the enormous gap between minimum and maximum wages. We must encourage the founding of more independent workers’ unions, through which they could channel their demands and grievances lawfully – a step towards ending the thousands of strikes that have plagued Egypt in the past few years. To steer the country towards social stability, and eventually, to economic growth, the government has to embark on mega infrastructure projects to absorb the young unemployed – the hundreds of thousands of street vendors, vandals, petty crooks, high-way robbers, minor drug peddlers, who live on the fringes of society in the slums around major cities. Most importantly, we



want a government that totally overhauls the education system. Egypt came last on the International Education Index 2013. And most of all, we neither want to become a theocracy, nor consent to an extremist contamination of our moderate Islam.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Marjorie Cohn, 'U.S. Chickens Come Home to Roost in Egypt', 2 February 2011, *Global Research*. URL: [www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=23048](http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=23048).

<sup>2</sup> 'Mufti al-Ikwan: Al-Iftar fi Ramadan Halal', 13 July 2013, *El-Fajr*. URL: <http://new.elfagr.org/Detail.aspx?nwsId=381797&secid=1&vid=2>; Hassanine Kroom, 'Al Marshed yebbeh lil mutzahreen al-iftar fi ramadan wa ikhwani yeshba marsi baabi dhr al-ghafari', 21 July 2013, *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*. URL: <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=65151>.

<sup>3</sup> 'Sarf: "Jihad al-nakah" fi rab'a wa "baghi" al-marshed', 4 August 2013, *CNN Arabic*. URL: [http://arabic.cnn.com/2013/middle\\_east/7/11/arab.papers11July/](http://arabic.cnn.com/2013/middle_east/7/11/arab.papers11July/); 'Sabah Al-Na'neyah', 18 July 2013, *Al-Akbar*. URL: <http://akhbar.akhbarelvom.com/news/newdetails/144561/6/%D8%B5%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B9.html#.Uo-nZuJIZ5Y>; Mohammad Rizq, 'Min Qasas Jihad Al-nakah fi rab'ah, 23 September 2013, *Al-Masri Al-Youm*. URL: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/2139686>; 'Hana Mohammad: Rasd 76 Hala nakah jihad bimediani rab'ah wa Annahda', 13 August 2013, *Al-Arabiya*. URL: <http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/arab-and-world/egypt/2013/08/13/%D9%87%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%B1%D8%B5%D8%AF-76-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%86%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%87%D8%B6%D8%A9.html>.

'Sharif Abdullah, 'Haqueqa zawaj nakah al-jihad fi rab'ah al-adweenah', 25 July 2013, *Al-Akbar Al-youm*. URL: <http://hawadeth.akhbarelvom.com/news/newdetails/145682/4/%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC-%D9%86%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9.html#.Uo-pDOJIZ5Y>; 'Mervat Tallway: Al-nisa takhtazf min al-tariq li'mumarisah al-jihad al-nakah fi rab'ah', 8 January 2013, *Al-Youm Al-Sabah*. URL: <http://arabic.arabia.msn.com/news/egypt-news/6733758/%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%B7%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%82-%D9%84%D9%85%D9%85/>; Fadihu min al-ayahrid al-thaqeel...



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jihad al-nakah fi rab'ah adawiya wa baqo'hu wa al-darb ma Assedat mefaj'a lawal mar'a  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acsOHPbPhBk>.



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